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Horrid Mysteries.



A STORY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF THE MARQUIS OF GROSSE.

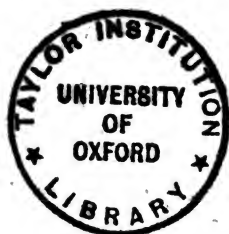
BY P. WILL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE, AT THE
Minerva-Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M DCC XCVI.



THE HORRID MYSTERIES.

CHAPTER I.

Extract from Elmira's Papers.

I AWOKE, at length, from that long swoon, and found myself stretched out in a coffin. Some more of the receptacles of the wrecks of mortality stood near me, and the odour of corruption was the first thing that affected my senses. The spacious and lofty vault was sparingly lighted by the faint glimmer of a single lamp, that was suspended to the ceiling. Its dying flame plainly told me where I was. What mortal can conceive a just idea of the sensations produced by the first breaking from sleep under such circumstances; and who could be able to recal only a single sentiment of those that crowded on

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my mind, if he ever was so unfortunate to have experienced what I did? I did not know what I should do in that dreadful situation; whether I should call for assistance, or patiently await the event. The lamp was a certain proof that I was in a place not entirely deserted by human beings; and I felt no other painful sensation, but a great weakness, and relaxation of my bodily and mental faculties. Yet I was not suffered to remain long in a state of consultation with myself; the sound of different voices vibrating in my ears from a passage whose entrance the dying glimmer of the lamp enabled me to descry. I even could distinguish the expressions and the subject of their discourse. Some declaimed against Carlos's inhuman barbarity, and some censured me for my imprudence; but one person defended me, finding it very natural that a weak, love-sick, and inexperienced girl should have been taken in by an artful and experienced villain. The talkers, having carefully
stopt

stopt a while at the entrance, came, at length, nearer, and appeared in the vault, exhibiting a large procession of compassionate faces of either sex. Some carried torches, some phials and glasses, and some garments and linen. The light, that now illuminated my horrid residence, enabling me to look around, I beheld myself enfolded in a cloud, and different vessels standing by my side.

“ Loud rejoicings re-echoed through the vault when my visitors saw me sitting in the coffin; and they ran towards me to complete my resuscitation, carrying me out of the damp cavern to a lofty apartment, where I was put into a well aired bed. Decency bade my deliverers to retire, and only two females staid with me, to assist me in changing my dress, while I gradually was re-animated with a pleasing warmth, and recovered the full power of recollection.

“ When they saw that I had entirely recovered my faculties, they congratulated

B 2

me

me on my preservation, praising God for having made them instrumental in my restoration to life.

“Thank God, Countess,” one of them began, “that you have been rescued from the cruel hands of that barbarian, and are now in the company of more humane beings!”

“From what cruel hands?” I replied, with astonishment.

“From those of your pretended lover, the Marquis Carlos of G*****.”

“Be silent, vile reptile,” I exclaimed, “and dare not to asperse the name of a man whom I adore!”

“Don’t put yourself into a passion, my Lady,” she replied coolly: “You will be of our opinion before many days are elapsed. We are members of a society whose sole business it is to make the sufferer forget his sorrows, and to restore the unhappy to happiness. Indeed, Countess, we flattered ourselves to deserve, at least, your gratitude.”

“What

“What could I have replied to the declaration of that woman in my situation? I was silent; and having taken a firm resolution to conceal all my ideas, I dissimulated to rely implicitly on the candour of my pretended deliverers. It was but too evident in whose power I was; and what I had heard of that society on my wedding-day forced itself with additional strength on my recollection. Though I could not unfold the real purport of that incident, yet it was sufficient to ascertain to me the truth of my suspicions. If, therefore, it was possible to extricate myself from their snares, no other expedient was left than to pay them in their own coin, and to attempt to outwit them by a dissimulation superior to theirs. I began, therefore, to pretend being more susceptible of the ideas which they endeavoured to instil into my mind, and returned gradually from my gloomy reveries. I was, indeed, partial to solitude; however, it appeared to them to be favourable to their secret de-

signs upon me; and the more the result of my contemplations seemed to make me uneasy, the less mistrust against their secret endeavours to encrease those distressing doubts did I display. I submitted, with an unaffected reluctance, more and more, to their attempts at diverting my mind, and to their exertions to restore me to happiness, as they pretended, and to return me to my family with an easier heart. A cheerful gaiety, which I kept in proper bounds, and strove to render as natural as possible, by an imposing varnish of truth, confirmed them in their belief of having gained upon my credulity; and I began to hope that I should find a favourable moment to give them the slip. I was not anxious to know the external circumstances of the confederates, thinking myself sufficiently happy if I could but escape their baneful breath.

“ Mean time a number of fine ladies and gentlemen gathered around me. I was invited to accompany them on a nocturnal

turnal excursion to a neighbouring castle, where I learnt, the next morning, that it was to be my future residence. The situation was, indeed, beautiful; the garden extensive and elegant; walking was, therefore, my chief occupation and amusement. Although I was never without company, or at least without such attendants as observed me from a distance, and the happy period of my elopement was probably not very near, yet I cheered myself up by numberless plans of accelerating it secretly.

“ My keepers studied to amuse me by numberless little diversions. Rural feasts, the charm of selected parties; beautiful, winning females, and young, amiable men, were to accomplish, with the smiling assistance of the graces, during a constant round of pleasures, what had been devised and begun under circumstances of the most serious and awful complexion. Every one breathed a general and delicate desire of pleasing me, and of

B 4

anticipating

anticipating my wishes before they had time to ripen to maturity; and I cannot but confess, that they several times accomplished their designs as perfectly as they could wish. I returned involuntarily their kindness, as if enchanted. They succeeded to make me more unreserved; and if not the few hours, in which I was not in their company, had weakened the impressions of the rest, I should scarcely have been able to avoid an intoxication which would have ruined me for ever.

“ Amongst the young men by whom I was surrounded, one distinguished himself particularly. He was of a most beautiful form, animated with a very dangerous fire, of polished manners, and an insinuating disposition, which rendered him pliable to all my wishes. He seemed to claim my favour in a more particular manner than the rest, depended entirely upon my looks, and was happy or unhappy as my humour changed. Never have the wiles of the most cunning seduction been

been applied in a more artful manner; all circumstances were in his favour: whatever the rest of the company said, supported and advanced his superiority; and being, in the sequel, convinced of the purity of his passion, by his indefatigable exertions to please me, I could not have avoided being caught in the snare at last, if not a trifling accident had rectified my opinion of him, and restored me to myself and to my plans.

“ He had a little French dog; and I grew so foolishly fond of the animal, that I frequently hinted to him, it would give me the greatest pleasure if he would make me a present of it; yet he seemed not to be inclined to part with his little favourite. At length he promised me, one afternoon, to let me have it in the evening. I was walking sometime before the assembly hour in the bosage, and passing the entrance of a bower, saw him in it, seated on a bench, and occupied with his favourite, and concealed myself behind a

B 5

thick

thick hazel-bush. He tied a ribband round the neck of his little darling, and having finished the task, he could not refrain from kissing him, and uttering the words, "Poor Thonon! we must part: however, thou wilt always be dearer to me than what thou art to purchase for me."

"These words wounded my heart like a dagger; and my whole situation lay, at once, undisguised before my eyes. I was ready to faint; and could scarcely refrain from rushing forth, and letting him see an Elmira entirely different from that he had known till then. Yet rage and pain fortunately stifled my tears and sighs, and I arrived at my apartment without being seen by him.

"As soon as I had recovered my recollection, I saw plainly how necessary it was not to give up the part I had begun to act. I prevailed upon myself, after a hard struggle, to assume again the semblance of cheerfulness, and an air of tranquil resignation. The dog was presented to me,
and

and received with an imposing pleasure: the donor expected, and demanded, at length, a reward for the sacrifice he had made to me; but being cautioned by what I had overheard, I found it pretty easy to evade his violent caresses and tender menaces.

“ Thus some weeks more elapsed, and I could still not find out proper means of effecting my escape. The danger of a longer stay grew every day more pressing. I knew, however, neither the district in which the castle was situated, nor the neighbourhood, and was carefully guarded. At length I attempted, with a very small probability of success, what I, perhaps, under more favourable circumstances, never had dared to risk. At a feast, which was given on my account, and on which all eyes were directed at me, I got suddenly from my throne, on which I was to receive an approaching procession, upon a walnut-tree, and fortunately concealed

B.6.

myself.

myself between the thick branches till night promised to favour my flight!

“ I descended from my asylum as soon as it was dark. A foot-path led me to a neighbouring village; and the darkness of night protected me on my retreat. Being animated with a more than common courage, I ventured to enter a cottage, exchanged my garments for a rural dress, dyed my face, and begged my way through the provinces of Spain and France to this peaceful spot. I lost, indeed, on my journey, a part of the jewels with which they had decorated me; yet I saved a sufficient quantity to purchase this little solitude, and to commence a little farm, which promised to afford me a frugal support for the remainder of my life?”

CHAPTER II.

“ **T**HE above chapter, dearest Count, is a faithful, but brief, extract from that part of Elmira's history of which

which I was ignorant till then. You see how singular the turn of her and of my fate was directed by a higher Power. If ever I had been capable to doubt that Providence guides the fate of man, the reflections which her account produced, would certainly have convinced me of the eternal truth, that a benevolent Being watches over our life and happiness, and produces light out of darkness.

“ Give me now leave to inform you of the remainder of my adventures, which I shall be able to conclude in a few words. Clara was in love with the son of a neighbouring farmer; but being poor, and the father of her lover a rich man, the latter would not consent to a union between his son and her. Being averse to sell or to abalienate any thing my fainting Elmira had possessed, I gave her the considerable produce of my little estate as a dowry, saw the young couple married, and went through Switzerland and Germany to
G*****,

G*****, where I had the happiness to make your acquaintance.

“ You know my history from that day: suffice it, therefore, to tell you briefly, that while you was fighting the battles of your country against Great Britain, I went to B*****, to commence a private, but, nevertheless, not inactive life, and to enjoy those pleasures I was accustomed to. I shall not tire your patience with an account of the little adventures, and the unimportant events, of that period in which I was constantly surrounded by members of secret societies, and enthusiasts of all sorts, got possession of their secrets, and observed that they were far inferior to what I already knew, or that they were partly connected with the confederacy in Spain.”

I shall here, at last, take up again the thread of those events I have mentioned in the middle of my adventures, which I have wrote down for the Count. The reader will recollect that a man (James) settled in our neighbourhood, who, as I apprehended,

apprehended, was nearly connected with me. His appearance threatened me with new misfortunes; and he seemed to intend opening a new way of influence on me through the heart of the Count. However, that ominous apparition passed quickly over. He had, indeed, purchased a country seat in the neighbourhood; but disappeared after a few days. I was told that he was going to B***** on matrimonial affairs, and my apprehensions vanished. That incident left, however, some impression on my mind; and many plans, particularly that of returning to my native country, were thereby obliterated from my soul. I comprehended many a mysterious phenomenon more clearly, and could, in some degree, account for Amanuel's apparitions, the frequent repetition of which now appeared to me to be a great imprudence of the unknown confederates. They probably intended to frighten me, by letting me see that I was surrounded every where by
their

their secret agents: however, the mystic appearance of Amanuel's presence, which had affected my senses so powerfully, lost its awfulness entirely through that oversight. I was no stranger to the artifices wrought through natural magic; and also not ignorant what a powerful influence a heated, overflowing, and transported imagination produces on our senses. The whole now appeared to me a mere scarecrow for children. The mystic farce was continued too long, and afterwards betrayed the whole confederacy. The mysterious veil was removed from that memorable moment, and my imagination being rectified by cool reflection, the miserable artifices of the confederates rather filled me with contempt than with awe. James's apparition in my neighbourhood opened my eyes; and my mind, being now liberated from the thralldom of a deluded imagination, firmly begins a new, decided career.

The

The Count was very much grieved at the sudden departure of the dear stranger, as he used to call him. I was already, in the beginning, strongly tempted to predict it; but cannot conceive what prevented me from doing so; and my friend was, soon after that incident, a second time obliged, by his affairs, to leave me, before I could conclude my history, and elucidate many mysterious events to him; for the various occupations in which I was engaged did not allow me, as I already have informed the reader, more leisure hours for the continuation of my memoirs than I could spare from the time of nocturnal rest.

My friend remained a long time absent, being detained by the unaccountable intricacy of his affairs. It really seemed as if they intended to exhaust his patience by juridical chicanes and petty artifices, to make him waste his precious time in the most useless manner. I very seldom received letters from him, and he always concluded

concluded them by informing me that he should not return so soon. Being convinced that I was completely acquainted with his ideas, he did not trouble himself about the management of his estates, which was an additional motive for me to be the more careful. There never was a period in my whole life, in which I knew so well to fill up every moment with such exactness; every one of them, from morning till night, being counted and designed for some employment. These tedious occupations did not at first please me much on account of their tiresome sameness; however, after a few weeks reluctant exertion, they grew so easy, and at last so amusing to me, that I could not disuse myself therefrom. I now exercised more authority over the Count's people than he ever did himself, because he had not acquired that knowledge of the inferior classes which I possessed: I conversed with every one, listened to every proposal of theirs, and frequently improved my own

own plans by comparing and uniting their ideas with mine. I was all the day long on horseback, or running from one part of the estate to the other, to give directions to the workmen. I never indulged myself with reading before all the labourers had finished their daily task, and my accounts were settled; and after supper, which received an additional relish from the fatigues of the day, I continued my memoirs till it was time to go to rest, when I went to bed highly satisfied with myself. The writing down of my memoirs was, from that time, continued with so much assiduity, that the manuscript was finished in less than a month after the Count's departure. I afterwards corrected it in many places, and gave it him on his return.

I was always very fond of gardening; and although my friend had an excellent taste in arranging the whole, yet he had too little patience to dedicate much time to a proper survey and regulation of the particulars.

particulars. I began, therefore, to revise his excellent plans, and to polish them more carefully than he had taken the trouble to do, and altered some parts of his garden accordingly. Some old buildings and pleasure houses were sacrificed to my impatient industry. A pavilion, which was situated in a corner of the park, and visited by no one who valued his life, was one of the chief objects that had excited my dislike. It was entirely concealed by bushes and trees, and seemed to have been designed by nature for solitude, which determined me to have it pulled down, and to build in its place a little hermitage, with a few small apartments; flattering myself with the sweet hope of being able to inhabit them the subsequent summer. I formed that idea and the plan for the new building in one night; went early in the morning into the garden, took some workmen with me, who were cleaning a basin, ordering them to provide themselves with the necessary implements, and
conducted

conducted them to the pavilion, with the instruction to pull the old nest instantly down. My orders were put into execution with the greatest alacrity. A part of one of the side-walls fell down of itself; and a large stone, which seemed to support the rest, being removed, we beheld the entrance of a narrow subterraneous passage. We stared at each other, seized with astonishment; and I asked one of the workmen whether he could strike fire? He affirmed it; and some of his fellow labourers tore some dry branches from a fir-tree, which, being lighted, the whole train followed me laughing into the cavern, expecting to find a great treasure, and to have some share of it. We descended, therefore, cheerfully; and I cannot deny that I also hoped to find something of value, though of a different nature from what they imagined. The scene which once took place between myself and the Count in that very garden, the small distance of the famous turf-seat from the pavilion,

pavilion, the communication of these two places through an almost impenetrable bosage, and the favourable concealment of the spot, seemed to promise me some important discovery, which was the reason of my being more apprehensive than the rest of my fellow adventurers. However, the consideration of my being attended by seven stout Germans, armed with their working tools, and of a brave appearance, soon inspired me with courage. I entered the avenue laughing, though with a beating heart, and called to the rest to keep close to my heels. I left one at the avenue, to guard us against all external attacks; and to alarm the servants at the castle, if we should not return within the course of an hour. Having descended some part of our way almost perpendicularly, the passage grew so small, that we found it very difficult to proceed. I constantly held the torch before me, examining the ground carefully, lest we should be caught in a dangerous snare.

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Yet, the passage soon grew wider, the way more even; and we had not proceeded a minute, when we came into a vaulted cave, which apparently formerly was a cellar. We discovered, in the back part, a second receptacle, furnished with a table and chairs, that were pretty new. On examining the table, I found that a piece had recently been cut out of it; and it appeared to me that some person had attempted to obliterate a character which seemed to have been cut into the wood. After a more minute inspection, I discovered some traces of an E.

I could not guess, at first, what that letter could mean, but recollected, at last, that the Count had the singular custom to delineate frequently such an E in the sand, or to cut it into the bark of trees; and I ere now suspected that letter to be the first character of the name of a former mistress. I discovered nothing else besides this; neither a new avenue, nor a continuation of the vault. I had ordered all

my attendants to search every corner: however, we found no farther trace of a human inhabitation; yet, when I left the vault, to ascend the passage again, one of them exclaimed, that he had found some papers. I ordered him to give them to me, and unfolded them. All of them were blank, except the fourth, on which something was written, and I was struck with astonishment when I read, "*Countess Elmira is cautioned against the young Marquis Carlos of G***** who means to impose upon her.*" I did not know whether I could trust my eyes; yet it was undoubtedly the same paper. Seeing, however, that my attendants were astonished to see me start back, I added coolly, after a few moments consideration, "The D—I may make that out without the other half."

So saying, I threw the whole parcel into the same corner in which it had been found. Thus terminated that singular expedition. I left the passage with an easy heart;

heart; but my conductors hung their heads, because they had not found the expected treasures. In order to console them for their disappointment, I gave every one a dollar, under the condition to mention nothing of our adventure to the Count's servants. I could easily foresee that this would be the surest means of having it circulated in the castle, and determined to watch whether I could gather nothing from the behaviour of the servants, all of whom I suspected very much. However, the whole affair became a subject of general merriment: every one was impatient to see the subterraneous vault; and the visits of the curious to the cellar became soon so numerous, that I ordered the passage to be shut up, because it was now the general rendezvous of the servants. Thus terminated that adventure. The new pavilion was finished in a short time, and furnished, and I had the pleasure of breakfasting there before the Count returned. He arrived at length, fatigued

by the incidents and the labours which had retarded his return so long. His affairs were, indeed, settled, and his law-suit was gained: however, the expences amounted to more than he had saved; and he had, besides, reason to regret the time he had wasted in that disagreeable affair. Yet he thought himself rewarded for his troubles, in some degree, by several discoveries he had accidentally made, and which he communicated to me without reserve as soon as he had read my memoirs.

“ Let us act just, dear Carlos,” he said, “ notwithstanding those villainous artifices. We are not bound to keep promises which have been forced from us by cruelties: it would, however, be to no purpose to inform you of the history of those days when I suddenly left you. You have discovered the mysteries of the cavern: it seems to be forsaken already for some time, and I have made a solemn promise to be silent. What is, at present, of
more

more importance to me, is to find out the persons that still are very active in our neighbourhood, that have confounded my law-suit, and, as I have reason to apprehend, will ruin us sooner or later. Marquis, are you my friend?" Here he stretched out his hand. I shook it warmly, and replied, "Yes, I am your sincere, your faithful friend."

"Will you ever preserve me your affection?" "By Heaven! for ever!" "Then come to my heart, my brother, and receive from me the same vow. I swear to be inviolably your friend; and may I be left without comfort in my dying hour, if ever I forget this promise only for a single moment. May Heaven preserve me your friendship; this is all that I wish."

"Lewis, I follow you whithersoever you go, in spite of all disasters that may befall you."

"Well, then, let us boldly meet those daring villains that intrude upon our fate;

let us save the last half of life; let us sacrifice a few years more, and without mercy attack them in the centre of their mystic abode."

"Here is my hand. I follow you."

"Let us go to Paris, assemble our friends around us, and then penetrate into Spain. How willingly would I sacrifice the greater part of my fortune in that attempt, if I could purchase peace and tranquillity."

CHAPTER III.

WE now exerted ourselves jointly to settle the Count's affairs as well as it was possible. Before six months were elapsed, we accomplished our purpose, and soon after arrived at the capital of France.

We were obliged to mix with the great world, in order to make discoveries, and to obtain all kinds of assistance in the execution of our plans. The Count spared
nothing

nothing to do credit to his rank and title, and to introduce himself with *eclat*. His equipage was one of the most splendid at Paris; his servants' liveries were in the highest taste; his dress was selected with elegance; and before many weeks were elapsed, we were introduced in the best circles of the town, and in some received with cordiality.

The amusements of that capital are too well known to require a minute description. The play, dancing, parties of pleasure, and particularly the charm of the fine arts, never miss their aim. The Count was not much attracted by them. My character, on the contrary, impels me forcibly to seek that sort of amusement. We mixed, therefore, with the gay circles, and enjoyed the pleasures of Paris, but without being much diverted. We made new connexions, and continued the old ones, without sacrificing much to them; and spared every day at least a few hours

for more important conversations in our closet.

It was very favourable to our purpose, that many of my former acquaintances and friends gradually gathered around us. Don Bernhard and Count S*****i were the first, and more strongly captivated with our plans than I had left them. They were surprised to the highest degree at Count S*****'s adventures, and impatient to have those mysterious incidents elucidated. The sufferings and experiences of some years had ripened our characters, and rendered them more harmonious; and we found, in the mutual exchange of our ideas, comforts, pleasures, and prospects which none of us had expected.

Our method of proceeding was also altered very much through the existing circumstances. Having divested ourselves of our former timidity, we made no secret of our plans, but spoke of them wherever we met; and while we thus gained many
friends

friends and sharers in our enterprize, we also obtained gradually more resources, and perhaps, defeated thereby many secret machinations of the confederates.

Yet all these favourable circumstances did not, at bottom, bring us much nearer to the mark; for all our power consisted, as yet, in nothing else than in firmness, and in a calculated opposition against probable future events. We had not fixed upon a plan of attack, but left the regulation of our proceedings to the direction of circumstances; yet nothing happened that could have guided us. The Count was inclined to return to Spain; and I would have faithfully followed him, if it had not been for Don Bernhard, and our associated friends, without whose assistance we could not expect to succeed in our undertaking, which, to confess the truth, promised very little, as the centre of the confederacy could easily be shifted; and we had already been convinced that it could exist any where. Thus our preparations

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rations were rendered ineffective by the confederates, while they took care to give us no opportunity of applying vigorous measures. We began, by degrees, to grow negligent, because no occasion occurred that could have given energy to our designs. Trifling amusements enervated our desire for great and important deeds; and the female world left us little time to meditate on serious occupations. A constant round of diversions unbraced our minds; and we soon looked upon our plans, which formerly had engaged our whole attention, as an object of exercising our wit. At last an incident happened which seemed to make us forget them entirely. A fatal love affair occasioned a difference between myself and the Count; deprived me, for a long time, of his affection and confidence, before I could prevail upon myself to make some sacrifice to him; and, surprising us unawares, almost terminated our investigations by an ill-fated jealousy. Chance only re-united

us,

us, and removed the veil of mysteriousness from our eyes.

Caroline de B***** was of an ancient and noble family in Picardy. She was not rich; however, her fortune was sufficient to afford her a good education, and to render her no despicable party. She was not handsome; but her complexion was fresh, her shape elegant, and her deportment natural and winning. She possessed an unaffected gaiety, which graced all her movements, and gave them diversity and novelty. She neither possessed a striking wit, nor an uncommon understanding: however, her sallies were always pleasing; and her modesty, good-nature, and evenness of temper, spoke highly in her favour. As for her character, I might well say, she had none; it was, at least, impossible to discern it; for she accommodated herself with so much ease and simplicity to the individual disposition of those with whom she conversed, and adapted herself in so natural a manner to

the humours of those with whom she was connected, that every one imagined to see in her his own picture. As for her heart, I may truly say that it was pure and noble.

It was, indeed, very unfortunate for us that we did not get sooner acquainted with that amiable being. If we had seen her on our introduction into our social circle, the impression she would have made upon us, would, perhaps, not have been so strong, or soon have been obliterated by other charming objects. But now we were tired by too much art; and our hearts being over-fatigued by the intricate mazes of the most consummate female coquetry, were in want of a place of rest in the lap of simple nature.

Caroline charmed us at first sight. We got acquainted with her at an evening assembly which we frequented almost every day to play at cards. Caroline had already, sometime before our arrival, accompanied some friends into the country; and being
a constant

a constant member of the cheerful circle where we met her, her return occasioned some confusion in the arrangement of the gaming-party. As soon as she perceived this, she declared that she would not play with us, but was determined to be received again into the party to which she belonged before she went into the country. This whim threw the whole company into a new confusion. Those with whom she desired to associate again, were already used to their new companions, and did not shew the least inclination to quit them; and their ladies were not less disinclined to be abandoned by their partners on Caroline's account. The general commotion to which this gave rise terminated at last in a loud laughter, which covered the face of the poor girl with a high crimson colour, and she declared that she would not play at all. Tranquillity and order were soon restored, and I seated myself by her side on the sofa; not ill pleased with the termination of that ridiculous affair.

C 6

However,

However, the Count's mind was far from being easy. It is almost impossible to brook such an incident with indifference with an irritability like his, which was unimpaired by misfortunes. Anger boiled in his heart, and he only wanted an opportunity of giving vent to it. A fire, whose nature I was no stranger to, flushed in his eye, and seemed to search an object. I ridiculed his agitation, and begged him to be easy: however, he replied; "Fye upon you, Carlos; how can you be so torpid?" "He then fixed his eyes upon a German officer, who played at some distance from us, and continued to smile at our disaster. "Don't you comprehend," he resumed, "that all this is pre-concerted?"

He was, perhaps, not much mistaken, if he suspected the German officer, who called himself Baron de H*****, to have acted in this affair with some malicious heat, and with design. Yet he was not a man that could submit to be scoffed at without

without chastising the offender. He knew the Baron already at Gibraltar, where he had fought with him against the Britons; and, by a strange accident, was his rival in the love of a Spanish lady. This had already incensed him against the Baron; and an affair of a later date, which I am going to relate, made him his implacable enemy.

The Count kept an actress of the royal opera, a charming girl, of uncommon wit, and a great knowledge of man; an excellent companion, but not very famous for her fidelity. Although he was not over fond of her, keeping her rather for fashion's sake than from inclination, yet he looked upon her favours as goods which he had bought, and which no one could intrude upon without violating his property. His vanity contributed to render his ambition still more tender with regard to that point; and there was a period when his mind was entirely occupied with plans of securing the fidelity of his Amasia
against

against all temptations which might be thrown into her way. But how was it possible he could have interrupted all the connections of a vain, voluptuous, and covetous girl, who had made it the study of her life to insnare men, and to jilt them, in her fetters? In short, he had sufficient reason for being jealous, and particularly of his sworn rival, Baron de H*****.

An odd incident served to blow up that dormant fire into a blazing flame. He went one evening over the Pont Neuf to pay her a visit; and intending to surprise her unexpectedly, to be certain of her infidelity, he had put on a blue coat, and taken only one servant with him. On coming to the middle of the bridge, he was at once surrounded by a troop of intoxicated citizens, who had drowned their sorrows in large bumpers, and, by their inebriety, were led to commit a number of ridiculous frolicks. One of them having engaged to discover the profession of every
passenger

passenger by his external appearance, they had placed themselves upon that spot to observe every one that went over the bridge, and the Count was unfortunately the first that happened to come into their way.

He that was to guess at the profession of the passengers, was extremely puzzled by the Count's appearance; a wager of some louis d'ors having been laid. He easily conceived, notwithstanding the disguise of my friend, by his gait and shape, that he was of a superior rank. He hesitated, therefore, some moments to pronounce his opinions; crossing his arms, and gaping at the Count. The latter being struck by the oddity of that scene, could not help smiling, which inspired the drunken inquisitor with additional courage. He turned, therefore, to his comrades, who were diverted by his perplexity, exclaiming, "I will be d——d, if I don't guess that gentleman's profession: I lay you one louis d'or more that he is a cuckold."

The

The whole company broke out into a roaring laughter; and the decision of the wager depending on the confession of the other party, they pressed the poor Count, in their merry humour, to confess the fact. My friend being armed with no other weapon of defence, but a cane, was in danger of being torn to pieces. He defended himself as well as he could; but, without the assistance of some soldiers, who came to his relief, he would probably have been forced to make the ridiculous confession.

Thus he was seasonably extricated from the danger which had threatened him; but, far from taking the whole affair for what it really was, an accidental frolick, he imagined it to have been pre-concerted, to give him a hint of the infidelity of his mistress; he fancied, at least, the whole town was already informed of his cuckoldom. His blood began violently to ferment, he quickened his steps to the house of his mistress, and entered her
apartment

apartment in the height of his passion, abusing the poor, trembling girl with the bitterest reproaches. However, she soon collected herself; and having attempted in vain to soothe his rage, by tears and tender remonstrances, asked him, at length, coolly, "whether she should ring for her people, or whether he preferred to quit her house without their assistance?" He chose the latter; and she appeared the next day in public as the declared mistress of Baron de H*****. This affair recurred, on the present occasion, to the recollection of my friend, and he imagined the Baron's malicious smiles alluded to it. He went, therefore, to him, whispering in his ear, "Baron, you will give me leave to ask you, how far *you* are concerned in this affair?"

The Baron made a low bow, replying, smiling, in German, "My Lord, I shall give you every explanation on that head you can wish for."

The

The place where we were being not proper for pushing the matter any farther, the Count pretended to be satisfied with this answer, and retired; yet I could plainly see what was going on in his mind. Caroline did every thing in her power to make us forget the consequences of her little caprice, displaying her mental charms with a most bewitching humour, nature, and elegance. She endeavoured to dispel the gloom which frowned on the Count's brow, telling him, that she would try her fortune with him the next day: however, nothing was capable of restoring the harmony of his soul; and while I felt myself as happy as a god by Caroline's side, and reviewed all my ideas to select for her the most natural and intelligible sentiments, he was absorbed in a gloomy reverie, from which he scarcely awoke now and then.

Supper was, at length, served up, and we sat down to table in tolerable good humour and harmony. The conversation turning on the siege of Gibraltar, the
company

company were desirous to know the particulars of it. The Count was requested to favour us with a circumstantial relation of that remarkable siege; but declined it with a great deal of politeness and modesty, directing the company to beg that favour of Baron de H*****, who had given many proofs of his courage and superior talents on that occasion. The Baron, having not the least suspicion that his conduct on that occasion was notorious, accepted the challenge, with a presumptuous smile, as a just tribute of his merits, and began his narrative. I was astonished to hear with how much barefacedness that fellow interlarded his relation with a number of various adventures in which he pretended to have been engaged. There was no rencounter in which he had not acted a principal part: he made the whole company shudder at the dangers which he pretended to have experienced during the war; and it was merely owing to his modesty and delicacy that he forbore to speak
also

also of those to which he was exposed by the fair sex. I am firmly convinced, that he flattered himself to have sold his rodomontades for sterling truth, as he did not take the least notice of the suspicious smiles of the company, and would certainly have carried his impudence still further, if the Count had not interrupted him at the conclusion of a most romantic adventure with the words, "*And then you awoke?*" An audible whisper, which ran through the company when the Count uttered these sarcastic words, roused him completely from his infatuation, and he stopped half a minute, glowing with shame and rage.

He then was going to vent his fury upon the Count, when the latter interrupted him with the greatest politeness, turning to the company, and begging leave to relate also an incident which happened at that time. The whole company signified their approbation; but few only guessed what was to come. The Count began his story.

story, directing some significant looks at the Baron, who wanted to continue his tale, and only could be silenced by the general clamour of the company.

“When we raised the siege of Gibraltar,” the Count resumed, “most of those who had expected to gain honor and preferment on that expedition as volunteers, abandoned every idea of making a new attempt; three of my comrades, and myself, resigned on the spot, and went farther into the country, to recover from the fatigues of the campaign, and to visit an intimate friend of mine, who had married a charming and rich Spanish lady. Our journey was more pleasant than is usual in Spain. Two of my companions, who resembled me in their temper and good humour, as well as myself, found every where sufficient opportunities for diversion; and when nothing occurred that could afford us amusement, the comical lies, and rodomontades, of our fourth fellow-traveller, made

made us forget the badness of the roads and the poverty of the inns.

“Don Antonio (thus we will call him) was one of the strangest human beings nature has produced. He had a pretty good share of understanding, and not little experience, but was of a most singular disposition. Although he knew that we had been eye witnesses of, and concerned in, almost all engagements, in which he displayed very little of the hero, yet he invented a number of adventures, in which he pretended to have acted a principal part, and endeavoured to persuade us of his veracity by a semblance of the greatest candour, as well as by numberless oaths.

“Well invented!” we frequently used to exclaim, “though it is not true!” However, he pledged his honour, and, what was still more important, his tried courage, for the truth of his tale. We resolved, therefore, unanimously, to try,
on

on the next opportunity, how far we could rely upon the latter.

“Our common friend received us as well as we could expect, and did every thing in his power to prolong our stay with him, and to give us pleasure. His country seat united all the charms of the Spanish clime, and our rural diversions were seasoned by the pleasant flows of humorous fallies. We played most charming little tricks; and our sociable harmony prevented us from being offended when, now and then, our frolicks degenerated into something more than jest. Our hosts and host soon knew Antonio’s weak side as well as we did; and we resolved to repay him with a vengeance, on the first opportunity, all the liberties he had taken with us, and soon were enabled to carry our purpose into execution.

“A sudden noise arose in the castle, one night, while we were at supper in a garden-house. Some of the servants came running, pale and with ghastly looks, to inform

inform our host secretly, that a ghost had been seen in one of the apartments. The Marquis acquainted us instantly with that intelligence. The ladies grew deadly pale, and started up from their chairs. Some gentlemen, who happily had succeeded to suppress the first emotions of fear, began to raise a loud laughter, and to ridicule the cowardice of the servants. The Marquis, however, declared the affair ought to be treated more seriously; ordered the servants to light some torches; and begging the ladies to keep themselves quiet and easy till his return, took up his sword, and begged us to follow him.

“Now a very tender scene took place. The married ladies, as well as those of the unmarried, who had a lover amongst us, began solemnly to protest against that resolution, and conjured us not to leave them unprotected. The Marquis, however, entreated them to give him leave not to suffer himself to be robbed thus quietly; and, after a number of remonstrances, admonitions,

admonitions, and obsecrations, had been exchanged, it was agreed to examine the affair in the company of the ladies. The latter took fearfully hold of the arms of their neighbours, the servants led the way with a blaze of torches, and we covered the procession with drawn swords.

“ I did not rightly know what to think of the matter, which appeared to me to be rather strange, and quite unpreconcerted. It was impossible to draw any conclusion from the looks of our host. He really seemed to be rather agitated, and I knew that he was but a poor dissembler. I also could not imagine that he wantonly would alarm a whole company, merely to punish an individual. I concluded, therefore, that really something must have happened; and giving, at that time, very little credit to the apparition of ghosts, suspected some roguery, and resolved to behave with as much courage as my unhappy education would allow in that point.

VOL. III.

D

“ I grew,

“I grew, at length, so tranquil and cool, that I was capable of making observations on the company. At first, a general, profound, and anxious silence prevailed amongst us, and was only now and then interrupted by a solitary sigh, which escaped some of our companions. Don Antonio uttered, at length, the greatest oath he could find in the visible agony of his mind. His fair neighbour (for he had carefully avoided to offer his arm to one of the ladies, in order to be at full liberty to take to his heels in case of necessity) conjured him to be quiet. However, he probably mistook this for a challenge to regale the company with some more of his fine exclamations, and repeated every oath he knew, to protest that he was impatient to have the pleasure of engaging a ghost. Yet, notwithstanding these strong protestations, he could not help looking fearfully around now and then, and keeping carefully between the two servants who closed the train. He even made, at intervals,

intervals, a certain noise with his teeth, which is not accounted to be a token of heroism, when the wind rustled a little stronger betwixt the leaves, and became more and more silent the nearer we approached the castle. The rest of the company were also not entirely free of fearful apprehensions; and there was not one who did not exhibit stronger or weaker symptoms of anxious apprehensions.

“ A sudden gust of wind, which extinguished some of the torches, served to encrease the fear which prevailed in our heroic society: and some of the ladies protested they would not advance a step farther, if they were not lighted again immediately. We were, therefore, obliged to halt, which happening frequently, our march was very much retarded; and those that were more fearful than the rest, gained time to communicate their apprehensions to their neighbours, and to infect even the servants, who, at first, had displayed pretty much courage.

D 2

“ We

“ We arrived, at length, at the castle-gate. The haunted apartment was on the first floor ; but the anxiety of the company displayed itself already at the staircase which led to the great hall. Numberless fears and apprehensions exhibited themselves on the countenances of my fellow-adventurers, which were rendered more visible by their painful exertions to conceal them from the rest. We now counted the company, to see whether none had stayed behind ; and were struck with astonishment, on finding that the Chevalier Antonio was missing. We were already going to ridicule his cowardice severely, and felt ourselves strongly inclined to laugh at the desertion of his vaunted courage, when he convinced us that we had wronged him ; for he came running out of breath, and wiping the sweat from his face. He even asked, with a great clamour, why we did not proceed ; and the whole company being re-animated with new courage

courage by his noisy exhortations, advanced towards the great staircase.

“ But now a new difficulty arose; none of us being willing or able to ascend the steps first. The Marquis was retained by his lady, and the rest were stopt by his example. At length, she suffered him to proceed, after he had asked her angrily, whether she took him for a child; and Antonio, who was in the rear, had exclaimed, Why we did not go on? He now ascended the stairs; and myself, with a friend of mine, who had taken me by the arm, pushed through the rest, and followed him closely, while the greater part of the company were loitering partly at the bottom, and partly in the middle, of the staircase, according to their respective share of courage. We did not mind their backwardness, and proceeded towards the haunted apartment with a great show of courage, but I dare say not without palpitating hearts.

D 3

“ The

“ The servants, who carried the torches, being in the rear, I went back to provide myself with one. The whole troop, who followed us slowly, watching every step of ours, were put in motion by my hasty return ; and some, who were already at the landing-place, put themselves in motion to turn back on the first signal. I could not help smiling at the fear of men who had fought like lions before Gibraltar, faced all the dangers and hardships of that fatal siege with coolness and bravery, and now were overcome so much by the prejudices of their religion and education, as to give way to a most extraordinary and childish fear. Instead of being infected by their example, I derived additional courage from their unmanly conduct, returned laughing to my friend, and opening the door for the Marquis, went before him with a torch.

“ However, we started a few steps back, seized with terror, as soon as we had entered the apartment ; and the rest
of

of the company, who were awaiting the event, hurried instantly down stairs. Before two seconds were elapsed, we were forsaken by the whole train, except a servant of the Marquis, who was uncommonly attached to his master, and would not leave him in the danger which seemed to threaten us. The fight which we beheld was, indeed, terrible enough. An enormous figure, with large, fiery eyes, advanced towards us; and I do not know whether an antecedent transitory fright does not sharpen the senses and the judgment; for I made, almost immediately, an observation which considerably diminished my fear.

“First of all, the figure was too grotesque. What a moderate deception would have effected, is generally frustrated by an extravagant one. I could not help remarking that the figure resembled the giant who challenged Don Quixote, the celebrated knight of the woeful countenance. This laughable idea, which

D 4

forced.

forced itself upon my mind, made me suspect the whole; for as soon as I advanced further with my torch, I perceived a second figure, sneaking into an adjoining apartment, which communicated with those of the Marchioness that bordered on the garden. The room in which we were was a state-chamber of the Marquis. This train of ideas came almost in a moment in my mind; and looking around, I missed a silver clock which used to stand on a table. Having seen it in its place before we went to supper, I could easily account for the apparition.

“ I took, therefore, our dubious host by the arm, exclaiming, “ They are thieves, as true as I am alive! Don’t you see that your clock is gone?” He was struck by that remark, and we instantly attacked the phantom with drawn swords. However, the human spectre had a long staff in its hand, with which it parried our thrusts excellently. The servant entering with a candle, along with my friend, I observed

observed that the torch which I still held in my left hand was in my way, and threw it into my antagonist's face. His head-dress caught fire; and I threw my sword down, taking hold of his stick. The Marquis did the same: we began to embrace him in a most violent manner, and before half a minute was elapsed, came with him down upon the floor. The fellow being seized with despair, displayed a more than human strength, and could have killed every one of us if he had been armed. Being, however, engaged by four men at once, he was soon exhausted; and begged us, in a hollow accent, to spare him. The Marquis promised to pardon him; and he confessed that he belonged to a band of five robbers, who had intended to avail themselves of the bustle our festival produced in the castle, to plunder it: in short, he confirmed my suspicion.

“His hands were tied, and he was committed to the guard of the servants.” The

D 5

Marquis

Marquis and my friend examined every apartment, in order to apprehend the rest of the gang; and I went down stairs to send some servants to their assistance. A death-like silence reigned every where, and not one human being was to be seen. They even had left some candles upon the stairs, to effect their escape with more ease. At the bottom of the staircase I found a lady who had been left there in a swoon; and a little farther I discovered Don Antonio in a condition that was not much better. As soon as he heard a noise on the stairs, he covered his face with his handkerchief, and expected a happy deliverance, seized with a most painful agony."

"Prepare thyself for eternity, Don Antonio!" I exclaimed, on coming nearer; "for thou must die!"

"Spare me, O! spare me only this time!" he stammered, in a hollow and broken accent, which scarcely was intelligible.

"No

“No mercy this time!” I replied laughing, in my natural accent. He knew me instantly, took the handkerchief from his face, and gazing at me with astonishment, said, highly rejoiced, “Dear Count, is it you? are you still alive? You have played me a fine trick.”

“I now gave him a brief account of the whole affair, and recommended the fainting lady to his care. This animated him at once with new life, and he hastened to her with the alacrity of a buck to lend his assistance.

“I found the servants dispersed in different parts of the garden, and called to them to assist their master. The rest of the company were returned to the garden-house, and there awaited the event in great anxiety. When I entered the door, the ladies sat up a loud scream, because they did not at first know me, and mistook me for the ghost. I never beheld a more singular scene than that. Every distinction of rank and sex was suspended for a while.

The general panic having driven the whole company into a corner of the saloon, the coyest ladies sat upon the lap of their lovers; the most obstinate shrew clung round the neck of her patient husband, and the bitterest enemies and rivals held one another enfolded in their arms in the most amicable manner.

“At length, they perceived their mistake, joyfully exclaiming, with one voice, “It is the Count! it is the Count!”

“It is impossible to describe the astonishment and the rapture with which I was received; not so much on my account, than because they saw themselves relieved from their apprehensions. I gave them a brief account of the affair; and when I had finished my report, the Chevalier joined us with the lady whom I had recommended to his care.

“Was the Chevalier also present?” one of the company exclaimed.

“Most certainly; he acted a principal part,” I replied.

“This

“This made Don Antonio suppose that I had not yet related the incident; he therefore took my assertion for a compliment paid to his courage, bowed, and began, with the greatest impudence, to relate the affair, with some additions and embellishments of his own invention. We listened patiently to his tale: however, the Marquis had mean time entered the saloon, and hearing his rodomontades, was struck with his barefaced impudence. He took his resolution on the spot, and winking me to follow him into the garden, communicated a plan to me, which was to make Don Antonio spend the night in a different manner than he seemed to expect.

“Our measures were soon taken; and we had only to give a hint to the Marchioness, in which I fortunately succeeded on my return into the saloon. She comprehended me so quickly, and so completely, that I concluded we only anticipated her design; thus much had Antonio exasperated

rated the company by his barefaced fictions.

“ Our return restored cheerfulness and merriment to our sociable circle. We sat gaily down to the desert, ridiculing one another for our fear, and the heroes of the drama earned the deserved applause. Nothing makes people more daring than a danger which has been happily overcome. There was not one amongst us who could not have defied all the infernal spirits; and but very few who did not loudly declaim against the existence of apparitions, as we had been fortunate enough to have discovered the human nature of one. It may easily be conceived who was the most clamorous amongst us. Don Antonio swore that he had laughed immoderately at our childish fear, that he had wanted to make game at me when I came down, and had been alarmed by nothing in the world than the situation of the lady.

“ Our hosts now interrupted him, declaring, that her education, as well as a certain

certain circumstance, did not allow her to coincide with the opinion most of the company seemed to have adopted. Every one being curious to know that circumstance, she was pressed to relate it; upon which she protested that it was no secret, that, every night, at twelve o'clock, such a terrible noise was heard in the chapel of the castle, that one expected it would be turned upside down. The Marquis raised a loud laugh, in which he was joined by the whole company, but particularly by Don Antonio, who, probably recollecting that midnight was already past, proposed to the company to go with him into the chapel. However, the Marchioness dissembled to pay no attention to what he said, and feigned to be offended by the ridicule which her information had been received with; declaring, that she would lay any wager, that none of the gentlemen who were pleased to laugh at her, would fetch a fan she had left in her pew in the afternoon.

“ A general

“ A general silence of some seconds was the consequence of this declaration. The Marquis, at length, thought proper to interrupt it, declaring, that he would cheerfully accept the wager, and that he was firmly persuaded any one of the gentlemen present would render her that service instantly with the greatest pleasure. We all confirmed his declaration, and begged the Marchioness to choose her hero. She now surveyed the whole circle, and Don Antonio always turned pale when she seemed to be going to fix upon him. Her looks were, to his greatest joy, several times fixed upon me; yet poor Antonio had, at length, the misfortune to be singled out by her. The Chevalier being bound by his word of honour, could not but accept the charge, and thank her for her good opinion of him. Having once more stolen a clandestine look at his watch, and convinced himself that it was near two o'clock, he took his sword, and left us with a very martial air. Yet his courage

rage failed him already at the door. Having inadvertently unfastened the red cockade of his hat, it fell into his face. He was violently frightened; but when we began to laugh, and declared that it was a bad omen, he collected himself again, and looking at us with an indescribable contempt, on account of our supposed timidity, flung the cockade into a corner. We took it up, resolving to make a good use of it. He had no sooner quitted the saloon, than the Marquis communicated his plan and measures to the company, asking the gentlemen which of them would act a part in the farce he was going to play? Don Joachim F*****, a man like a giant, and Don Romero L*****, who was rather of a dwarfish stature, offered instantly to act the principal parts. Our plan now was briefly concerted, and the company rose to follow the Chevalier at a distance, and, if possible, to get the start of him."

"Never

“Never has a plan better succeeded. The sky was indeed overclouded; however, it was not so dark that we could not have discerned the objects at some distance; and we could clearly perceive that Don Antonio anxiously listened at every bush before he approached it, and that his steps grew slower and slower, the nearer he came to the wall of the church-yard. He brandished his sword to frighten away the spirits, and at length arrived at the gate of the church-yard. He opened it with a great noise, and shut it again in the same violent manner. He, at the same time, began to sing and to whistle with all his might, struck against all the crosses that came in his way; but soon lost his way, and stumbled over one tomb-stone after the other, which enabled us to steal into the chapel from the opposite side about ten minutes before his arrival. Having missed the large gate, it was almost impossible for him to come to the pew of the Marchioness,

Marchioness,

Marchionefs, becaufe he would have been obliged to climb over all the other feats.

“ There was only one lady in our company, who, however, had almoft spoiled the whole fport. For when fhe faw the poor Chevalier climbing over the pews, and heard him groan in a moft rueful accent, fhe broke out into an immoderate laughter, and endeavouring to ftifle it, rendered it only more hideous. I had placed myfelf near the organ; and being at a lofs how to remedy the fault fhe had committed, accompanied her with a ftill more difharmonious paffage on the inftrument. This produced an effect which furpaffed my moft fanguine expectation, as but little wind was in the bellows, and I never was an adept in mufic.

“ The poor Chevalier was almoft petrified. He fat down in a pew, and awaited, in a kind of ftupefaction, the things that were to come. I am fure he would have cared neither for the fan nor for his reputation, if he had had the leaft hope of getting
safe

safe out of the chapel. In this distress he looked anxiously about for an asylum, and seeing something of a white colour, which were the pillars of the pulpit, shine through the dusk, that prevailed around him, he climbed over the remaining pews to get at that supposed place of safety.

“ We thought it our duty to light him on that expedition. A great electric machine, which the Marquis had ordered to be placed near the pulpit, served our purpose excellently, emitting from the conductor, at first, large sparks, and then a whole electric stream. We also lighted some candles of the large chandelier, which was suspended in the centre of the chapel, by means of a quantity of hemp, which was overspread with sulphur and pitch. However, we soon extinguished the candles again. Two servants, who were stationed at the church-yard, broke some panes of glass, which came with a great noise into the chapel: the doors were opened and shut again; the howling of cats

cats was imitated; some of the company blew a strong current of air into his face by means of large bellows; the shrill sound of whistles re-echoed from every corner; and as the effect of the electrical machine grew stronger, whole streams of fire illuminated the chapel at intervals. We also had contrived to tie cords round his arms and legs, which made the poor fellow believe that he was spell-bound. In short, the effect of our contrivance was so great, that the actors themselves could not help shuddering now and then.

“ Mean time, a thick smoke arose near the altar, and Don Joachim F***** and Don Romero L***** stepped forth from its grisly womb, dressed like devils. The latter being of a very diminutive size, made the former appear a great deal more gigantic than he really was. The garments of either were streaked with phosphorus; and Don Joachim F***** carried a large lanthorn on his head, on which was written, “ *Sinner, prepare thyself, for thou*

thou must die!" Don Romero had the cockade which Don Antonio had flung on the ground, and now was stained with phosphorus, fixed to his head. Both of them extended two long fiery arms, the extremities of which were armed with claws, and howled some hollow accents. Antonio shut his eyes when he saw these two frightful figures, and did not open them for some minutes.

"However, the scene was soon changed to our mutual terror. The pulpit-door opened; a man, clad in a white robe, armed with a large cross, and carrying a lanthorn, stepped forth. He was soon followed by one more, clad in black.

"It was the pastor of the place, and the sexton, who had heard the uproar in the chapel. The Marquis having neglected to inform them of our nocturnal undertaking, they were come to see what was the matter. We soon knew them; however, the two disguised devils, who never had seen them before, imagined that

that they were apparitions from another world, their late fear seized them again, and they ran with all possible speed towards the door. They had, however, the misfortune to lose their way between the pews; Don Joachim's lanthorn dropt from his head, and fell in Don Romero's face; the one was frightened at the other; yet the latter had the presence of mind to take it up, to fasten it to one of his long artificial arms, which he took upon his shoulder, and thus happily gained the door. His giant-like assistant was close at his heels.

“ But now a new misfortune happened; for when the priest began his exorcisms, both of them were tempted to look once more back; the little one, who led the way, turning suddenly round, knocked the lanthorn so violently into the face of his tall companion, that the latter, imagining to have received a blow from a spirit, dropped half dead upon the ground. Don Romero was terribly frightened at

that incident, but retained sufficient recollection to disencumber himself of every thing that could retard him on his flight, and to leap with the greatest agility over the graves. Yet the terror which pervaded his agitated mind did not leave him sufficient power to proceed far, and he seated himself, at length, half fainting, upon a tombstone, patiently awaiting the event.

“The Marquis now resolved to put an end to the whole scene; and making a signal to the servants, the machinery was concealed as well as possible; every one of the actors stole silently out of the chapel, and the whole company met at the great gate. The first thing we did was to restore Don Joachim to the use of his senses; Don Romero soon joined us; and having lighted our torches, we repaired again to the chapel.

“The priest was still preaching. He had taken the candle out of the lanthorn, and fixed it upon the pulpit, devoutly
reading

reading the exorcisms from his book. The Marquis now stepped before the pulpit, asking the priest what his strange behaviour meant, if he was in his senses, or had lost his understanding? Yet he remained some time longer in his error; and recollecting, at length, the voice of his master, was seized with amazement, and gave us a brief account of his transactions. The Marquis then begged him to go home, and we hastened to assist the poor Chevalier.

“ We were struck with terror on perceiving not the least sign of life in him. His pulse ceased to beat, and the Marquis repented already the whole affair, thinking to have carried the jest rather too far, when the poor fellow, at once, opened his eyes to our greatest joy. Yet he still fancied to be in the power of spirits, and cried aloud for assistance. We scarcely could convince him that we were human beings, and come in quest of him. He now was carried to the castle, and put to bed; having

entirely lost the use of his speech. When we visited him the next morning, we found him quite restored, and he informed us that he had fallen asleep at chapel, and had a terrible dream."

Here the Count concluded his tale, which we had listened to with the greatest pleasure, though most of us had heard it already, and knew very well who the person was whom he had introduced under the name of Antonio. The Baron was covered with shame, and had lost the power of utterance, yet was prudent enough to suppress his wrath.

What rendered the whole tale most entertaining, was the presence of Don Romero L*****, a man of known courage, honesty, and of an excellent temper, who made no secret of his defects; and, at the close of the history, exclaimed, "By holy Peter! I was terribly frightened."

"Then you also was present on that occasion?" one of the company asked, laughing.

"Yes!

“ Yes! yes!” he resumed; “ and the Baron yonder, too, was not far off.”

The laughter encreased. However, the Baron thought it proper to bridle his passions, and not to reply a syllable, but to wait for a more favourable opportunity to revenge himself upon the Count, which he very nearly had found that very night.

We now conversed a little longer on different subjects, and then parted, as it seemed, entirely reconciled to one another. The Count saw Caroline to her carriage, and soon after went home with me, to all appearance completely happy.

He was used to sit every night half an hour with me on my sofa, and to converse on the occurrences of the day; but that time his mind was so much occupied with the past events, that he forgot it, and went directly to his apartment, which occasioned one of the drollest scenes of my life.

To make myself perfectly understood, I must premise a brief description of the

E 2 arrangement

arrangement of our house. The ground floor was occupied by our landlady, a mantua-maker; the first floor was inhabited by the Count and myself; and my servants lodged in the second floor. Our landlady was a young, gay woman, who understood her profession excellently, and made the utmost of every little advantage. She not only let the remaining apartments of the ground floor to compassionate ladies, but her charitable disposition was so great, that she also admitted some young gentlemen by day and night to her own room. The Count and myself being very much displeased with her conduct, we had taken a resolution to quit her house the subsequent week.

The Baron had visited us sometimes, and taken a liking to our little gay landlady. He was not used to slip an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the ladies; yet our hostess did not think proper to be kind to the Baron; and some weeks elapsed before he could make any considerable

derable advances in her favour, notwithstanding the great pains he took to make her favourably disposed to him. But learning, at length, that two floors in her house soon would be evacuated, he paid for that which the Count inhabited beforehand, and, in return, put himself in possession of the happiness he had been hunting after for some time. He paid, that very night, a visit to his future landlady; and was safely housed in her bed when the adventure occurred which I now am going to relate.

CHAPTER IV.

THE reader will recollect that the Count, on our return from the card-party, went immediately into his own apartment, instead of sitting half an hour with me as he was used to do. Having undressed himself, he observed that it was too early to go to bed: he, therefore, flung himself upon his sofa, to reflect on

the occurrences of the day, and his affair with the Baron. His blood being in a violent fermentation, he tormented himself for some time with ruminating on the bad consequences the latter might produce. Yet the association of ideas at length brought him back again to Caroline; he wandered from one smiling reverie to the other, and at last fell asleep.

His situation being, however, not very easy, he awoke after he had slept about half an hour. In his drowsiness he imagined to have rested on my sofa as usual, took up his candle, and wished me a good night, supposing that I was gone to bed. He went softly down stairs, and thus came to the apartment where the mantua-maker was fallen fast asleep in the arms of her new paramour, and, notwithstanding his perceiving some change in the furniture, yet he still imagined to be in his own apartment, and was astonished at his heavy drowsiness, which, as he thought, represented every object in a different

different manner to his eyes. He now began to undress himself, opened the curtains, and placed the table with the candle near the bed, to extinguish it when he should have gone to bed. But unfortunately one of the Baron's boots laying on the floor, he put one foot of the table upon it, the candle dropped down, and fell burning into the face of the former. The Baron awoke with a terrible scream; and it may easily be conceived how much the Count was astonished to see his bed occupied by his mortal enemy. Being of a very irascible temper, his astonishment was turned into the most violent rage at that supposed impertinence. He uttered a dreadful oath, and ran to the corner in which he had placed his sword; but being not able to find it, he rung with such a vehemence for his servants, that the string of the bell broke; for being at a loss to account for that incident, he was determined to chastise the Baron in an exemplary manner.

The latter had, mean time, hastened out of the bed, and found his sword. Thinking that the Count was his rival, he congratulated himself upon the favourable opportunity, he imagined to have, to get rid of him at once; and while his fair companion screamed with all her might, went in his shirt to attack the poor Count, who held his breeches in one hand, and with the other, which was armed with the Baron's cane, parried his antagonist's thrusts with the greatest difficulty. Yet being an excellent fencer, he soon attacked his adversary in an offensive manner, without recollecting that his weapon was only a wooden one, beat the Baron's sword out of his hand, and gave him such a violent blow on his stomach, that he began to roar in a most rueful accent.

The lady, who had not ceased screaming all the time the combat lasted, imagined that her Adonis could not but have received some material hurt by the Count's furious blows, accompanied the vociferation

tion of her charmer with additional force, which roused every inhabitant of the house that had not been awakened by the Count's violent ringing of the bell. A number of people appeared, by degrees, in the apartment, in their shirts, and seemed to be very much inclined to assist the landlady. Some spits and pokers began already to approach the Count, when my coachman entered the room with his horse-whip. Being of a giant-like stature, which was not inferior to his bodily strength, he could look over the heads of the rest, and soon perceived the Count's distressful situation. He, therefore, began to lay about him with his whip, and handled the naked figures so unmercifully, that the contest was terminated in a moment. The assailants dropt their arms, and saved themselves as well as they could.

The Count seeing himself delivered from his aggressors, began to reflect a little, and perceived that he was not in his own apartment. The screaming lady in

E 5

the

the bed now attracted his attention, and he went to take her out. No sooner did he behold her face, and see who she was, than he guessed at the real state of the whole affair. Want of gallantry being not on the list of his defects, he thought it was his duty to excuse his fatal mistake, and to soothe the wrath of the offended fair one. He, therefore, told her a number of sweet things, excusing himself as well as he could; and seeing many inviting charms, disencumbered of every envious covering, before him, embraced her at last.

In that very moment I entered the apartment, armed with a sword, carrying a candle, and accompanied by all the servants, who were armed in the same manner, the Count's valet having waked me as soon as he had missed his master. A more ridiculous scene never has been witnessed. On stepping out of my apartment, I had met some shopmen, who were half naked, and took to their heels as soon

soon as they saw me. When I came to the lady's apartment, I saw the coachman standing on the threshold, gazing into the room, and holding his sides with laughing. The Baron stood in the centre of the apartment in the same posture, which, however, seemed to be owing to a different cause; and the Count sat by the bed, caressing and, at last, tenderly embracing, a lady that was almost entirely naked. The latter glowed with a high crimson hue, but the fire that burned in her face was not the effect of anger. Her longing eyes surveyed the beautiful form of the Count; she suffered his kisses, and appeared to be displeased with nothing but the number of witnesses. Seeing me, at length, at the head of the servants, she ejaculated a loud scream, and disengaging herself from the Count's embraces, hid herself in the bed.

The first thing I did, was to fly to the assistance of the poor Baron. The Count, who laughed immoderately, assisted me

E 6

faithfully;

faithfully; but our crest fallen hero was in such agonizing pains, that he scarcely could speak. He complained of violent pains, and a great quantity of congealed blood had gathered on the place where he was wounded. I sent instantly for a surgeon, and assisted my friend in putting on his cloaths. The lady in the bed declaring that it was impossible he could remain in her apartment, we carried him into a coach, and saw him to his lodgings, where we committed him to the care of his servants.

We took the greatest pains to keep the whole transaction private; however, this was impossible; for it was circulated through the whole town the next morning. We received every where congratulations, and were obliged to relate all the particulars of that strange incident. The Baron was no sooner able to go abroad, than the Count received a challenge, in which the choice of arms was entirely left to his option; and he was generous enough to
fix

fix upon pistols. Time and place were agreed upon. The Count seemed to preface a fatal catastrophe; having made his will, and committed it to my care, he bade a tender adieu to all his friends, under the pretext of a little journey. Caroline too was not forgotten. He imagined no one knew any thing of the real nature of his pretended journey; yet I could plainly perceive that his friends looked upon this journey as his last, at all events. Caroline almost fainted, on rising from the sofa, to offer him her beautiful hand for a farewell kiss. My rising jealousy perceived this plainly, and it did also not escape her that the Count observed it too with great emotion.

We left town early in the morning on horseback, and found the Baron and his second already on the appointed spot. Neither of the two antagonists being a great marksman, each of them had brought two braces of pistols with him, which were charged by the seconds, and then exchanged,

exchanged. The steps were measured, and they took their proper distance. Five shots were already fired without any effect. The Baron aimed so miserably, that he almost had wounded me, though I was more than six paces distant from the Count. I therefore called to him, when he was going to fire again, "not to tremble so much." He was, however, but too successful; for the Count dropt on the ground, exclaiming that he was wounded in the side. I hastened to assist him, and saw the blood gush violently from his wound. The Baron too offered to assist my friend; but the Count waved his hand, desiring him to flee as fast as possible. The Baron seemed really to be very much affected; and having embraced the Count and myself, mounted his horse, and rode away with his second. If the Count had been killed on the spot, I should probably have made a better use of the remaining brace of pistols than my friend. But seeing a chance of saving his life, I was too
much

much occupied with a desire of giving him relief, as to entertain any idea of vengeance.

I flattered myself with the hope that the wound was not mortal, the ball not having penetrated deep enough as to injure his intestines materially. I only apprehended the violent effusion of blood might prove fatal to him. Having dressed his wound as well as possible with the assistance of my servant, we carried him to a neighbouring village. The surgeon was of my opinion, and the event confirmed my hope; for a few weeks confinement and rest cured him completely.

I could not prevent the duel, and the danger of the Count, from being known amongst our friends at Paris; and that incident gave us an opportunity of perceiving that we had a great many who really wished us well. All of them displayed the most anxious desire of seeing him, and of contributing something towards his recovery. The ladies, in particular,

ticular, scarcely left our house; and when he began to mend perceptibly, we began again to recommence our jocund assemblies with our usual gaiety. Caroline also visited at our house under the protection of an old uncle, and seemed to be particularly rejoiced at the Count's amendment.

One evening we were sitting at table, partaking of a cheerful supper. The Count had declared that day that he intended to leave his apartment on the subsequent one, and we were talking of a little feast which was to be given on that occasion. No one was more happy at it than Caroline. She sat opposite to me, and I could plainly perceive the expressions of her secret joy on her glowing countenance. I was absorbed in the contemplation of her charms, and felt my heart beat in unison with hers. I was thrilled with a secret pleasure, which, however, was mixed with something very bitter.

bitter. How nice is the perception of a lover's senses!

At once she grew pale; her large blue eyes, which were sparkling with rapture, gazed joyfully amazed at the door which was behind me; her fork dropt upon the floor; she held her napkin before her face, and leaned a little back against the chair. I was just going to her assistance, when every face was turned towards the door. The chairs were suddenly overturned; every one left the table; a confused clamour filled the apartment; and turning my head, seized with astonishment, I beheld the Count enfolded in the arms of friendship.

What a feast for us to see him thus unexpectedly amongst us! We all received him as a lost and suddenly recovered treasure; the tenderest careffes were lavished upon him, but the most expressive endearments were only weak emblems of our ecstatic joy. He returned them faintly; but the languour which his words and
motions

expressed only served to animate them with additional ardor. We placed him in the middle; but no cushion was deemed soft enough, no chair commodious enough, to seat the dear, recovered fugitive upon. A general satisfaction prevailed in our joyous circle; he was the monarch to whom our hearts paid a willing, cheerful homage. Caroline seated herself, at length, with a charming simplicity, by his side, to nurse the dear idol of our hearts. He was deeply affected by her angelic goodness, but could not find words to express his feelings.

Wit and humour now returned to our circle in an overflowing measure, and with additional gaiety. The graces mingled with our society, and the god of cheerful hilarity presided at our table. Our conversation overflowed with witty sallies; a general desire of giving pleasure to our darling pervaded every bosom. The Count's cheerfulness was of a more gentle complexion; he smiled only when we laughed.

laughed. Caroline animated him with half concealed and half visible caresses, and the warmth of friendship soon blazed perceptibly up in the flame of love. Every member of our happy society was charmed with the dear object of our love, and applauded his enchanting ideas; I alone sat mute, and, at the sight of his happiness, felt myself consumed by a secret fire, for which I neither could nor would account.

Here begins a period of my life, on which I cannot reflect without despising myself; in which I was misled by a glowing passion to forget every thing that was dear to me, and that I ever should have held sacred. And, gracious Heaven! what a passion? Not that of a first love, in which the heated blood urges us to sacrifice all prejudices, and every idea that opposes our desires; it was not that love which boldly breaks all the fetters of human nature, and even tears all other softer ties; no, it was a passion kindled by jealousy after the *first* bloom of life was past, and

and numberless painful experiences ought to have put me on my guard, after love even had lavished all her blessings on me; a hopeless, unhappy passion, inflamed by impossibility, and combating the most sacred duties. What a misfortune is it to *have been* for some time the favourite of fortune! Nothing had been able to resist me as yet, but here was the boundary of my power; and while I attempted to overleap it, I was in danger to lose a friend, a real treasure, in the pursuit of an imaginary one.

I was the only person in our cheerful circle that did not sincerely share the general flow of pleasure which pervaded the heart of every one present. The smile of cheerfulness sat on my lips, but baneful poison rankled in my heart. My eyes, which scarcely were able to retain the tear of painful disappointment, were overclouded with a mist. Every innocent glance of Caroline's looks, meeting those of the enraptured Count, stung me to the heart;

heart; every tender gesture of hers threatened to choke me. I laughed immoderately, to conceal the real cause of the big tears that started from my heavy eyes, and to disguise the visible agitation of my bosom.

Yet my strange alteration did not escape the Count's keen sightedness. He now took a too small share in the general flow of pleasure as not to be a good observer, and repeatedly extended his hand to me over the table to reconcile me to him. I accepted, but could not have squeezed it for the world. My cheerfulness was so unnatural, so extravagant, that I am astonished it did not strike the whole company.

"Dear Marquis," said he, as soon as we were left to ourselves, "dear Marquis, what ails you?"

I had squeezed myself into a corner of the sofa, absorbed in a profound reverie, averting my weeping eyes from the Count, and turning them towards the window, through which the pale light of the moon trembled.

trembled. A melancholy train of gloomy scenes of former times, as it were, passed visibly the review before my overclouded eyes, and I compared the overflowing measure of my sufferings with the scanty portion of my joys. Only the present moment sways in our mind in such a disposition, and reflects its hue on sufferings and pleasures past, on our wishes and fears, on our hopes and expectations. Feathers sink to the bottom when the torrent is too violent, and rocks are unrooted. In that moment the whole course of my life appeared to me to have been destitute of every joy, and futurity stared me grisly in the face. Without being rightly conscious of the original source of that agonizing state of mind, every expectation was thereby infected, and every cheering hope destroyed at once. No situation of mind is so dreadful as the moment in which a violent, hopeless passion, which we have struggled with in vain, convulses every faculty of the soul in its first incon-

4 scious

scious rise. I scarcely heard the Count's question, yet the dubious shake of his head did not escape my notice.

"You don't hear me, dear Carlos!" he resumed. "I fear you are not well?"

"Indeed, I believe you are right," I replied mechanically; "for I feel something here," pointing to the left side.

The Count laughed at that gesture, assumed a cheerful air, and said, "So much the worse, Carlos; for hurts on that side are generally incurable." He expected I should fall in with his merry humour; yet I was entirely mute, and he resumed again:

"Tell me, for Heaven's sake, Marquis, what is the matter with you. You are entirely changed; or do you think that I have not seen the tears which you attempted to disguise by laughing, nor that I have perceived that you did not squeeze my hand when I offered it to you so cordially?"

"Don't

“Don’t speak of it, dearest Count. I am, indeed, not well.”

“Indeed not? And that malady attacks you in the very moment in which I feel myself well again the first time?”

“Dearest, best Count; for God’s sake, don’t be bitter. I cannot, I cannot bear it to day.”

“Bitter!” he exclaimed, with a mien which was ten times more so. “It is, indeed, the first time to day that any person taxes me with it. I was not bitter while I was unfortunate; it must therefore originate in my happiness. “But,” added he, in a soothing accent, “do you really think that I am such a bad and inattentive observer, that I should not have seen at whom your tenderest and most burning looks were directed?”

“Pray, tell me, at whom were they directed?”

“The former at my fair neighbour, and the latter at myself. The tears, that
started

started from your eyes, could not extinguish their jealous fire."

"Jealous, did you say? By heaven I do not comprehend you."

"Alas! how much is my Carlos altered! Can that be *my* Carlos, whom I doat upon, who was the tender partner of my joys and sorrows, my guardian genius, the sharer of all my secrets and my inmost thoughts, whom I looked upon as my better half? I scarcely can persuade myself that he is the same person. By his kind assistance I have recovered from a dangerous illness, and he does not rejoice at his own work."

"Lewis, your reproaches are unjust. By the eternal God! I never have loved you with a greater ardour than in that fatal moment. But you are not mistaken; I am ill, very ill. I scarcely know myself again."

Here a torrent of tears relieved me at once. My pulse began to beat with uncommon violence, my whole frame was

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convulsed; a feverish tremor shook all my limbs. I never have experienced similar symptoms. All the agonizing feelings of my straitened heart convulsively communicated themselves, as it were, to every part of my agitated frame. The Count was almost petrified at the sight of these emotions, which thrilled me by fits, and which I struggled in vain to overcome. I wanted to speak; however, my teeth chattered so violently, that I could utter none but inarticulate accents. I wanted to shake hands with him, but trembled so excessively, that I missed his. I wanted to recline my head against his bosom, and relapsed half-fainting upon the sofa.

“What a mysterious incident!” he exclaimed ever and anon. “I cannot persuade myself that you are really ill: or shall I send for a physician?”

I begged him, in the greatest agony, for a little water and wine; my mouth being so much parched that I scarcely could open my lips. He gave it me, and
I felt

felt myself refreshed. He now seated himself upon the sofa, to wipe the cold sweat from my face with his handkerchief, entreating me, again and again, to compose myself. "All will be well," he added. "You know how little I value my life, if I can be useful to you: should I, therefore, not willingly share my happiness with my dear Carlos?"

"Dearest Lewis!" I groaned, "rather a thousand reproaches, than that heavenly goodness. Alas! I do not deserve it." So saying, I struggled to disengage myself in a fit of wild despair from his embraces; however, he would not let me go.

"If *you* don't deserve that love, that tender kindness; who else can merit it?"

"Tell me, O! tell me, my injured friend, do you really not hate a rival?"

"A rival! Is this the fatal secret? Yes, Carlos, I confess Caroline could make me happy, and obliterate the recollection of what I have suffered. My passion began as early as yours. It sways in my breast

F 2

equally

equally powerful as in your poor heart. We have the same right; but I must tell you, that I believe my hopes are better founded than yours." I shuddered violently. "However," he continued with a deep groan, "you have nothing to fear; I cease, from this moment, to be your rival. I rather will renounce happiness for ever, than purchase it at the expense of your tranquillity and peace of mind. Here is my hand; Caroline is yours. I renounce all my claims to her heart, and leave you at full liberty to gain it for yourself." So saying, he squeezed my hand, and strained me tenderly to his bosom. How was it possible I could have expressed the grateful feelings of my heart? However, he was satisfied with himself and with my tears. Every noble, generous deed produces its own reward. Broken accents speak stronger, and with greater energy, than words; and amongst all languages that of gratitude is the most monosyllabled.

He

He now left me to myself with his usual gentleness. His eyes were, indeed, rather overcast with a melancholy gloom, and his brow was not cloudless; yet he restrained his grief at the sacrifice he had made, and spared my feelings. But, alas! what a dreadful night succeeded that fatal evening! my fever increased after the Count's noble declaration, and the dawn of morning found me absorbed in gloomy reveries.

“This is then the fruit of thy sufferings, thy travels, observations, and resolution?” I said to myself: “thy most solemn vows, and thy vaunted friendship are wrecked upon a miserable passion? How deeply must he despise me! And has he not the greatest reason for it? Is he not greater than I? Did he not tell me that Caroline would render him happy for life, and restore his long lost hilarity to him? He never has enjoyed the bliss of love in its fullest extent, and I deprive him of it at his commencement of a new life: I, who

am a voluptuary, a spoiled fondling of love, and have but lately wept at the early tomb of an adored wife ! Carlos, thou art the meanest wretch, and not deserving of thy existence, if thou canst hesitate to return that sacrifice."

It is incredible how much pain it cost me to come to that resolution ; a resolution that was too natural and just than that it ought to have appeared to me a sacrifice. I began to meditate more seriously upon it, and was astonished at the unnatural state of my mind. The first love heats a blood that rolls through a youthful, healthy frame ; and the kindling fire of sensations that have just unfolded themselves, urges us beyond the limits of humanity ; and yet my senses never have been in such a tumultuous agitation ; even not when I first met Elmira, animated with a full sense of my pride, and conscious of success ; nor when she dropt into my trembling arms, encircling my neck as my happy and blessing wife, and my
senses

senses were, for the first time, incbrated, on her bosom, with every rapture love is capable to afford; nor was my blood heated to a similar degree in Rosalia's arms, who had taught me to empty the cup of intoxicating sensuality to the last drop. Maturer age also had contributed to cool the heat of passions; and Elmira's modest meekness, the dear cares of a tranquil domesticated life, unruffled by sorrow, and flowing in a soft and gentle stream, had blunted the edge of my desires. What could, therefore, have deprived me of my senses in that moment; what could have rendered me so callous against the admonitions of a just and friendly heart; what could have been the reason of the vehement tempest that agitated my whole nature?

While I was occupied with these and similar reflections, which succeeded each other with an incomprehensible impetuosity, the idea of my singular fatalities in Spain forced itself upon my soul. Don

F 4

Bernhard.

Bernhard, who constantly frequented our house, though his character did not suffer him to assist in all our banquets, happened that night to be of our party. Count S*****i also was present; and both being in an uncommonly merry humour, they entertained the company with a relation of our little Bacchanals at Toledo. The recollection of those merry scenes reminded me, by a natural association of ideas, of the separation of our society, and of the fate of its individual members. I recollected that one was seduced by an Italian singer to abandon our cheerful circle; that a second was called away by family affairs; that a third was intoxicated by something mixed with his wine. The latter idea made me start up with a loud scream. "Heavenly powers!" thought I, "should, perhaps, the unnatural state of my mind and body be the effect of a similar cause?" I hurried out of my bed. The dining room was separated from my bed-chamber only by two apartments. I
put

put a night-gown on, and went with the greatest precaution thither, to ascertain my supposition, if possible. The glasses were still upon the table; the servants being used to remove every thing in the morning when the company stayed too long. The dawn of morning peeped already through the windows, and enabled me to discern every object without difficulty. I began to examine the glasses, but with very little hope of success, as it also was possible that something might have been mixed in my plate; nay, it even appeared to me to have been too hazardous to attempt mixing an inebriating drug with my wine or water; though I was so much absorbed in thought, that I perhaps should not have taken the least notice of whole clouds of impurity in my glass. My apprehension soon was confirmed beyond contradiction; for I discovered in one of the glasses, standing near the place where I had sat, a whitish matter on the bottom, which undoubtedly was the re-

mainder of what I inadvertently had swallowed.

The conclusions I deduced from that discovery were of a most alarming nature. It was evident that the agent of the authors of that atrocious deed must be one of our servants, and at the same time have few accomplices, or none at all. My servants had, however, been employed very little at table; those of the Count having waited upon us from the moment he had joined our company. I had, besides, suspected two of his people for some time; for these fellows were of such an enormous and unnatural stupidity, that I could not conceive how the Count could keep them in his service. Being, however, unwilling to throw an odium upon an innocent person, I resolved to conceal that incident and my suppositions from my friend, and only to watch them with the greatest vigilance. My blood being still in a violent fermentation, I mixed some lemon juice with wine and water,

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which

which refreshed me more than I had expected. I could, indeed, not sleep; but found myself a great deal better on the subsequent morning.

CHAPTER V.

THE Count, who came very early to see how I did, found me pale and languid. I entreated him to forget the whole scene of last night, because I had made the observation that I really was very ill. He sent immediately for a physician, who shook his head, declaring my illness to be a fever of a most dangerous nature, and found it necessary to bleed me. Yet I rose at ten o'clock, in health and pretty good spirits, feeling no other inconvenience than an ebullition in the blood, and an unspeakable languour. I was several times strongly tempted, in the course of the day, to inform the Count of my suspicions with regard to the affair of last night; and had the best opportunity of

F 6

doing

doing it at table, where I examined the wine, and every dish, with an unusual care, which occasioned him to ask me whether I was afraid to be poisoned by him? Yet that very question sealed my lips. His extraordinary agitation, and the struggle with his heart, which was not yet entirely decided, imparted to every thing he said a certain bitterness which he could not conceal, notwithstanding his endeavours to appear open and kind to me. Thus frail is the human heart. I saw, with secret sorrow, the distress which the sacrifice he had made me inflicted upon his agonized mind. I might have soothed his agony, if I had explained to him that my singular behaviour on the preceding night had been owing rather to a disordered body than to a weakness of heart; however, his silent reserve, and my being doubtful how he would receive it, prevented me from coming to an explanation.

The

The only thing I did was to make observations on myself; and the deeper I penetrated into the secrets of my feelings, the more coldness to Caroline did I discover in my heart. I was highly rejoiced at it, and yet apprehended that it was impossible I loved her nevertheless. I heated myself more violently in attempting to grow cooler, and secretly asked myself, "Is it *possible* you could love Caroline? It scarcely can be; and yet I apprehend it really is so. She has, indeed, not gentleness and judgment enough, and also appears to have too much self-will, as to be capable to sacrifice much for her lover; however, she has a certain spirit of conversation which charms me, and a natural insinuation that flatters self-love, and must render its object happy. But is all this worth sacrificing a tried friend, whose peace of mind appears to depend on her love? No, Carlos! be ashamed, and conquer a fatal passion, that owes its existence merely to an unnatural state of thy body,

left

lest thou becomest the sport of others that have kindled it in thy heart, and strive to gain the applause of thy own understanding, of the Count, thy friends." This soliloquy terminated in a solemn resolution to shun Caroline as much as decency would permit, and I was determined to carry it that very day into execution. We were invited to an assembly, where we were sure to meet Caroline; my indisposition affording me a natural pretext for staying at home, I resolved not to go. Not knowing how to amuse myself all the evening, I went to my closet, and searched for some books. I carried at least half a dozen to my sofa, without being able to determine which I would read. I also had got some music for my flute, and put a chair to the Piano forte. At length, I put a night-gown on, and stretched myself upon the sofa, reading aloud, to silence the voice of my heart. Thus I was in an excellent way of spending the evening in private, and to divert my mind, when suddenly a carriage

carriage stopped at our house. I was violently frightened. "Good God!" said I to myself, "I hope I shall not be disturbed by visitors!" shut my eyes, and pretended to be fast asleep.

Not two minutes were elapsed, when my closet-door was opened, and a person entered. He approached the sofa softly, while I consulted with myself whether I should not open my eyes a little to see who was so kind to disturb my sweet repose? It was the Count, and in full dress. "My God! in full dress?" I exclaimed, starting suddenly up, and surveying him with gazing looks.

"You play fine tricks, Marquis," he said coolly. "I really thought you was fast asleep, and you start up at once as if you were going to fly in my face!" So saying, he put his sword on, which he carried in his hand, went to the looking glass, and examined his head-dress.

Seeing that I still continued to look at him without making the least attempt to stir,

stir, he put his hat on, turned round, and crossing his arms negligently, said, "But tell me, Marquis, what means that comedy you are acting there in your great night-cap?"

"A comedy!" I replied, with looks of astonishment.

"I think you have had sufficient time to take your nap; though you have dined to-day with an extraordinary appetite."

"You are mistaken, Count," I began peevishly: "I have had no appetite at all."

I would have given any thing if I could have provoked him to enter into a contest with me on that point; for I was determined to prove clearly that I never had dined with less appetite. He went, however, to the window, without returning a word, began to hum an air, looking into the street, and dissembled to be occupied with some ridiculous object. At length he resumed, still looking out of the window;

dow, "How long will you let your carriage wait at the door?"

"My carriage at the door! I don't comprehend you. Have *you* ordered it?"

"Yes, I have; and it is your state-carriage. Have you entirely forgot, that I am the king of the feast which we are to have, and that the Minister of H***** and the ***** Ambassador will be of the party?"

"Pray tell me, dear Count," I replied, "whether I am dreaming? for I assure you, I know not a syllable of it." (I really had almost entirely forgot it.)

"Have I ever seen the like?" he replied, turning round. "All the world has been solemnly invited last night. I come to fetch you, and you are not dressed. These are fine doings, indeed! I am sure the card-tables will be occupied before you are ready, and you may easily conclude that I shall play to-night?"

All my fine plans vanished in that moment: I saw nothing but the gay company, dancing, playing and laughing.

"Well,

“Well, then, I must make haste to dress,” I replied mechanically, taking my cap off, and ringing for my valet. He came, and used such expedition, that I was in my carriage a quarter of an hour after.

We came, indeed, too late; all the card-tables were already occupied; and Caroline having despaired to see the Count that night, had left the company to pay several visits before supper. The Count was determined to play, and succeeded at length to collect a party. Being not disposed to play at cards, I stole upon a balcony, which looked into a large yard covered with lofty trees, where I abandoned myself to pleasing reveries. The delusive dusk, the humming in the air, and the ominous rustling of the cooling breezes betwixt the trembling leaves, created sweet sensations in my mind; and my imagination was agreeably occupied with forming pleasing fancies, when the door behind me was opened at once. On
turning

turning round I beheld Caroline, who, mean time, was returned, and had left the apartment for reasons similar to mine. She seemed not to have observed me at first, being rather startled when she saw me. Yet she soon collected herself, saluting me with her usual good nature and simplicity, and inquiring how I did. I began to tremble, and replied with visible confusion, and in broken accents.

She began to laugh, resuming gaily, "I really think you have been sleeping, Marquis, for your phrases are uncommonly odd." I confessed that I had been dreaming, at least, and being asked of whom, I replied, "of you, charming Caroline."

Thus I opened a conversation on the very subject I had so firmly determined to avoid. She declined every thing I said with the gayest humour, which imperceptibly led me to add a great deal more of the same nature. In short, our conversation grew very warm. She was violently
agitated

agitated, notwithstanding her cheerful humour; and at length began repeatedly to speak of the Count, pitying him with a most charming kindness for his paleness and melancholy, and even asked me whether his heart was not the prey of some silent grief? She could have chosen neither a subject nor words that could have made my blood ferment with greater violence.

When the air grew more chilling, she told me she would go and fetch her shawl, and soon join me again. I offered to do it for her; however, she insisted upon going herself. I counted every minute; but she did not return. Having waited in vain above a quarter of an hour, I returned to the company. She sat by the Count, looking in his cards, or rather contemplating his beautiful countenance, which exhibited striking marks of melancholy, and received additional charms by the languid paleness his illness had left upon it. He never had appeared handsomer to me than that night. The speaking
language

language of his mien was indeed now and then interrupted by an indescribable perplexity; however, the goodness of his heart continued to prevail in every feature of his benevolent countenance. His dark eyes, flashing with a faint fire, spoke powerfully to the heart; and the pale enamel of his lips resembled a rose that first begins to blush.

Caroline was entirely absorbed in the contemplation of his affecting features; her face was the mirror of his, and repeated every mien of her melancholy neighbour by its movements. As soon as the Count perceived me by his side, he endeavoured to involve me in a conversation with Caroline, who just was starting up, exclaiming, "Good Heaven! I have forgot the Marquis, who waits for me on the balcony!" She was rejoiced to see that I had joined the company, and drew her chair closer to the Count.

The latter began, from that moment, to be entirely absent, replying little, or
nothing

nothing at all, to her observations and questions. This offended Caroline at last, and she rose suddenly from the card-table, declaring that play did make people unaccountably insupportable. She then wished the Count, laughing, a good night; repairing to the opposite side of the apartment, where a forte piano stood, and began to play.

Yet she could relish nothing. I followed her like her shade, taking up a violin to accompany her; selected some of her favourite airs; but every thing was intolerable to her. She grew, at length, uncommonly sad and gloomy, reclining herself against the back of her chair, fetched a deep sigh, and shut her eyes.

I did every thing in my power to amuse her; but nothing would do: she returned very short answers, and grew cooler every moment. She continued to keep up that humour till the gaming parties rose; and being placed, at supper, between the
Count

Count and myself, her cheerfulness soon returned with additional lustre.

This charming change seemed, however, not to have the least effect on the Count. He continued to be sad and gloomy, however attentive and obliging she was to him. She was indefatigable in her exertions to rouse him from his melancholy stupor, displaying her wit and good humour in the most advantageous light; but nothing would succeed. The company was enchanted with her lively sallies and acute remarks; the Count only was dejected and absorbed in gloomy reveries. He had formed his plan, and nothing could tempt him to give up his resolution. His pertinacy was so firm, that neither Heaven nor Hell would have been able to draw him only a hair's breadth from his course.

At length she grew tired of that frigidity, and addressed herself to me, to punish him for his sullen reserve, thinking, perhaps, that jealousy would effect what
love

love was not equal to perform. But she was mistaken; for the Count grew more communicative, and I was as laconic as he had been. I was but too sensible of the real motive of the honour she did me; my pride did not suffer me to avail myself of her favourable disposition, and my cheerfulness was far from encreasing. Thus the evening, for the pleasures of which so many preparations had been made, was spent in a very irksome and tedious manner.

From that time I saw Caroline almost every day; it was at least not *my* fault if I did not. The Count's melancholy encreased every day more visibly; he frequently shut himself up in his closet, retired early from all companies, or stayed entirely at home. His friends ascribed that love of solitude to the effects of his illness; and I confirmed their supposition. Every spark of generosity seemed to be dead in my heart during that fatal period; I saw him struggle against his passion with
an

an indifference that covers me with pungent shame whenever I think of it; he was a living picture of sorrow, and I had not even so much feeling left to comfort him. In short, I was so completely, so thoroughly altered, that it is impossible my friends should not have noticed it.

The female heart is never entirely void of vanity; and none that is not pre-occupied, will be able to resist a firm and indefatigable exertion to gain upon it. I now was frequently in private with Caroline, and none of my other rivals was very formidable. I really imagined to have made some impression upon her heart, and that she had completely forgot the obstinate Count. I enjoyed that little, dubious happiness with a rapturous pleasure, when an accident suddenly overturned the airy edifice of my vanity at once.

We met at the country seat of a friend to celebrate a rural feast. The fine season was already on the verge; autumn had, however, sufficient charms left to make us

forget the amusements of the town for a short time. The vintage was getting in, and that is the time when merriment and pleasure display themselves in the most natural and charming manner.

The necessary preparations were made, at the country seat of my friend, solemnly to celebrate every day of that general rejoicing. The two most virtuous girls of the village were publicly presented in the church with a garland of white roses, and received a very liberal dowry. Their beauty was, indeed, not equal to their virtue; yet they received that reward with such a grace, and so much modest innocence, that every one was convinced, beyond contradiction, that they deserved having been selected from the rest of their sisters. This enchanting harmony between gracefulness and virtue is generally nowhere to be met with in that high degree as among the French peasantry.

No one could deny that all his softer feelings were completely gratified among
that

that troop of amiable country girls who, during the short time of our stay with them, never lost sight of us. These remarks had a powerful influence on my subsequent resolutions. All of us gentlemen were greater or lesser finners, and it afforded us the highest pleasure to exchange the coquetry and art of our ladies with the sensible and open simplicity of those innocent children of nature. Joy and cheerful mirth animated, therefore, every one of us; and we found many little innocent means of gratifying our glowing humour, and the demands of a heated blood, without injuring the virtue of those innocent rustics. Dancing and songs, little feasts and processions, fire-works and comedies, followed each other in a pleasing succession, were always different in their nature, and, nevertheless, only parts of a well arranged whole.

Even the Count began to cheer up a little, yet without being able to take his usual share in these amusements. Caroline

was still a little angry with him, or at least pretended to be so; and being used to have always a declared lover, gave me the preference. I was obliged to sit always by her side, to carry her gloves and her fan, and to follow her every where as her esquire. Even when somebody talked to me at a small distance from her, she inquired, with the greatest simplicity, "where may the Marquis be?" This induced me to flatter myself to be secretly beloved by her, though she never suffered me to speak of my passion. She neither acted the prude, nor was reserved, but behaved like an offended wife that is going to lose her husband, and importuned already with proposals of a second marriage. The Count soon observed that she seemed to be very partial to me, and frequently squeezed my hand by stealth with averted looks. Yet my proud heart soon conceived a presumption upon her favour, which unexpectedly made me sensible of my mistake.

One

One afternoon she roved with me thro' the garden, playing numberless little pranks. She was more immoderately merry than I ever had seen her before, and her amorous gambols fired me to a degree of which I never thought myself susceptible. She was, besides, dressed with uncommon elegance and taste. Her fine shape, the activity of her limbs, the pliancy of every part of her graceful form, the luxuriant growth of her curling hair, which wantonly overshadowed her forehead and bosom, and her easy, cheerful gait, made her resemble the Goddess of Mirth. I was intoxicated by the sight of her unassuming charms, and enchanted by the jovial roguery of her sparkling eyes.

Being, at length, exhausted by her playfome gambols, we seated ourselves upon the swelling turf, where it was overshadowed by a tuft of myrtles. She broke off some of the depending twigs, and began to throw them at me. I had just picked up two, and was going to fling

them at her in return, when she suddenly averted her face from me towards a walk covered with lofty trees. I turned round, and beheld the Count coming slowly towards the place where we were sitting. He was alone, and so profoundly absorbed in thought, that he did not see us. His arms were crossed, his head depended upon his bosom, his eyes were half shut, and he seemed to be entirely unconscious of the objects around him. He made now and then motions, as if he conversed with some person, dropt one of his hands, covering with the other a part of his face.

Caroline suddenly grew serious; I wanted to continue our frolicsome sport, but she paid no attention to me, replying to all my questions nothing but, "The poor Count! how melancholy he is!" "The poor Count!" I repeated with great emotion; and one of her sweet looks thanked me for my concern.

When

When he came nearer, without seeing us, I called to him. He awoke from his gloomy reverie a little frightened; yet he had too much power over his countenance as not to exhilarate it immediately; and he always grew extravagantly merry, whenever he changed from a melancholy mood to cheerfulness; which now also was the case. Yet Caroline could not be deceived by his unnatural jocundity; her countenance assumed an uncommon serious aspect, which impelled him to use still greater efforts to cheer her up. I seconded him faithfully; and when nothing would succeed, we grew, at last, so excessively merry, that she offered to rise, and to leave us.

“I perceive, beautiful Caroline,” he now began, “that one of us is disagreeable to you, and I fear I am that *one*.”

Although he said this in a laughing accent, yet Caroline returned neither a word, nor even a look; remaining quietly on her seat, and playing with her fan.

G 4

“No,

"No, no!" said I, "You are mistaken, dear Count; I am that person." I directed a scrutinizing look at her while I uttered these words; but she still continued to be taciturn.

"You probably think so," the Count resumed, "because she is so serious ever since an unfortunate accident has made me interrupt your conversation?"

"I don't like to enter into a contest with you; but let us make an experiment. That proud goddess may decide herself. Kneel down, and take this myrtle sprig." He kneeled, laughing, down, and took the myrtle in his hand.

"Now, fair Caroline," I began in a solemn accent, turning to her, "it is your turn to choose. Here you see two lovers kneeling before you, who adore you with equal tendernefs, who would sacrifice their life with pleasure to save yours, but rather will devote it to your happiness. Either offers you a myrtle sprig, accept that of him whom you prefer to the other."

I could

I could not help thinking that it was cruel to treat the poor Count thus: however, the present opportunity seemed to offer me that little triumph in such a natural manner, that I could not resist the temptation of enjoying it. My poor neighbour trembled, and was in a violent agitation, while I anticipated my victory with a smiling countenance. Caroline, however, instead of treating the matter as a frolic, as I had expected, rose with dignity, and in a very solemn manner, which excited our astonishment; but no sooner had she surveyed us with a dubious look, than she lost all presence of mind. Her face was alternately overspread with a deep crimson hue and a deadly paleness; her bosom heaved with greater violence, and she breathed louder, covering her countenance repeatedly with her hand, and displaying an uncommon emotion. After a few seconds, she recovered the dominion over herself, darting an unspeakable tender look at the Count, who stared at her

G 5

like

like a statue, and another less significant one at myself, snatched with vehemence the myrtle sprig from my friend's hand, averting her face, and said, in a trembling accent, "I thank you, dear Count."

It is a kind of miracle that I did not lose the use of my senses on the spot. It rather seemed as if I had received a thousand eyes more, to see more plainly what now ensued. The Count was almost frantic with rapture, forgetting every thing, the world and myself, and straining the trembling girl to his bosom. At first, she only suffered his caresses and kisses; but soon returned them with equal fervour. Tender looks, and voluptuous sighs, were mutually exchanged, and the glowing fire of love burned on their crimsoned lips. They were infolded in tender embraces, while I continued to kneel before them in a kind of senseless stupor.

The Count observed, at length, my forlorn situation, and raised me with a grateful look. "My Caroline," said he
to

to the sweet girl, "let my dearest friend have a share in your affection." So saying, he pressed me to Caroline's bosom. Heaven was in his looks; he believed to have regained every thing while he could strain the dear object of his love and the friend of his heart to his heaving bosom.

"Yes, Marquis," Caroline began, "I should have preferred you to all the world, if I had not known the Count. Be my friend, as you have been that of my Lewis, and you always will find my heart open, kind, and affectionately disposed to you."

I was seized with stunning stupor, and incapable of returning an answer; I even could not evince my gratitude by a mute sign. I bent my weeping eyes upon the hand which she extended to me, and felt it burn more violently than my face. This was the only sensation of which I was conscious. My heart ceased almost to beat, and a chilling tremour thrilled my frame, but was soon succeeded by a con-

vulvive heat. My breast heaved violently, and yet I had it not in my power to unburthen it by a single sigh.

The Count embraced me, squeezing my hand. "You know, my dear Carlos," he added, "that my rapture is not unalloyed with pungent grief."

Caroline now raised me up, putting my hand between her arm, while the Count took hold of me on the other side. They spoke little; however, their tender looks conveyed comfort to my poor heart. I was scarcely conscious of being led by them.

"This then is the consequence of thy adventurous undertaking," said I to myself in the evening, when I was alone in my apartment: "fate has punished thee as thou didst deserve. Yet it is fortunate enough that that decision, that the certainty of thy fate, has cooled thy foolish presumption, and that thou hast a greater share of pride than of any other passion."

I cannot

I cannot but confess that my pride only saved me, my passion being not strong enough to resist it. I never had, till then, loved without hope; and even Caroline had opened a favourable prospect to me by her innocent sportiveness. The first blow my humbled vanity received was dreadful enough, yet it soon recovered from that unexpected shock, and rendered me easy. I should have been blind, if I could have overlooked the Count's superior merits, his enchanting form, his gay and even temper, and his sensible heart, which was ever ready to make the greatest sacrifices to the objects of its love. Yet no one will expect that I should have been able to witness the felicity of the two lovers with tranquillity. I resolved, therefore, patiently to keep them company, while they should remain in the country, and then to repair to some other part of the world; a resolution, the first part of which I performed more faithfully than I had reason to expect. I took such a tranquil,

quill, but less cheerful, share in all their amusements, deceived myself so much by my equanimity, and forced myself to such an imposing unconcern, that the serenity of the Count, who firmly believed that I soon would be cured entirely, visibly increased, and grew every day more natural.

But how great was his astonishment when I entered his apartment, a few days after our return to Paris, and informed him that I was going to leave him for a short time. He scarcely could believe that I was serious: I told him, however, that he was mistaken if he imagined my heart was as cheerful as my countenance. I alleged such strong and reasonable motives for a tour through France, and a visit to a little estate I possessed in Provence, that he approved my plan at last, though it was very visible that it gave him pain to part with me even for a short time. We found, however, some comfort in the hope of a speedy cure of my mental disease,

disease, and of my subsequent return. I had, besides, found out the most amiable travelling companion I could wish for: this was Count S*****i, who was in a situation similar to mine, and sincerely rejoiced at my proposal. The Count and myself being now completely reconciled, we embraced each other with an affectionate heart and weeping eyes. He offered to spend the night with me, and to accompany me the subsequent morning a few leagues. Wishing, however, that my journey should be looked upon merely as a pleasure excursion, I desired that the farewell-scene should be as short as possible. Having, therefore, settled the manner in which our correspondence was to be carried on, I disengaged myself from his embraces, and spent the night in private in my apartment, giving audience to my thoughts, and preparing for my departure.

S*****i and myself had agreed not to render our journey tiresome, by taking

too much care of our convenience on the road. We provided ourselves with good horses, and very little baggage; and were attended only by two servants. Being thus accoutred, we began our excursion, independent on the rudeness of the post-masters, who are of one cast all over the world. As for my companion, I had not the least apprehension of falling out with him, for he was good-nature itself. I called at his apartments with the first dawn of the morning; we mounted our horses, and the Count wished us a pleasant journey from the balcony.

CHAPTER VI.

S*****i and I left Paris with light hearts, and cheerfully anticipated the pleasures which awaited us. Our hilarity encreased with every mile that carried us farther from the residence of every terrestrial happiness. We did not regret it in the least; and were entirely occupied with the
the

the serenity of the sky, with our plans, and the good-natured cheerfulness of the country people. Berry lay before us, and promised to afford us ample scope for observations and amusement. Autumn was on the verge, and the wind whistled more chilly and bleak through the fading leaves: this is, however, the very season that agrees best with a certain weariness of soul. My companion was, besides, a man that would have been capable of soothing the acutest sorrows; for a most insinuating gentleness animated every word of his, and he took the warmest interest in the least trifle that concerned the heart. The objects that presented themselves to his eyes, made him completely forget all his cares; his exuberant imagination was sufficiently purified by the trial of early disappointments and sufferings; and his hilarity of mind reflected a cheerful light on every object that presented itself to his eyes. His heart was the amicable abode of tender sensibility; and he was too good-natured

natured to confine his friendship to an individual fellow-creature, cherishing the whole human race with undivided affection.

We travelled for some time without meeting with any remarkable incident, accelerating our course whenever we thought proper, and stopping at every place which promised to afford us pleasure. Count S*****i being disposed by nature, and I by my fate, by philosophy and stern necessity, to find every where scope for amusement, we met at all places where we stopped a kind reception, and people with whom we could converse. Nothing is more ridiculous than to travel for the sake of amusement and improvement, and at the same time to pay a nice attention to one's rank. I have known very few rambles who travelled with that intention, that did not display more or less of that foolish pomp. A traveller never ought to expect real pleasure and benefit from his rambles, if he is not initiated in the great art

art of being a peasant amongst country people, an artist amongst artists, and a merchant amongst merchants.

I have never known a man who possessed the different qualities and perfections which compose that art in a more extensive compass than S*****i; his temper, which breathed nothing but cheerfulness and affability, appropinquating him to every open physiognomy. He spoke the language of all ranks, knew all their prejudices, their favourite ideas, and peculiar expressions. He could assume almost any shape; and no one could resist his manner, which spoke a language that is generally understood, the language of the heart. My rambling life, and the frequent changes of my situation, had taught me also a little knowledge of man; but whenever I was near him, I was but too sensible that I was obliged to exert all my attention, if I would spoil nothing. He stole almost irresistibly upon every heart; and scarcely a quarter of an hour elapsed before he was the

the idol of people who saw him the first time. There was no rest in the house before our horses were watered and baited, and our dinner or supper got ready. All was in a bustle: six feet were in motion as soon as one signified a wish; they assembled cheerfully around us; spoke freely, and without disguise, of every thing. The prettiest girls were selected to dance with us, or offered themselves voluntarily with the most amiable simplicity and innocence. Wherever we shewed ourselves, we beheld joy and good will depicted on every countenance; and were happy even amid the smoke of several dozens of tobacco pipes. If we stayed more than one day at a village, some little feast was generally given on our account; the best bottle of wine was fetched out of the cellar; the young girls of the place were assembled; and these poor people, who only wanted a pretext for being merry, were rendered happy for several hours by the share we took in their amusements.

S*****i,

S*****i, in return, flighted neither their dishes, nor their offers, nor their society; he ate and drank with every one what was offered to him; danced as well with the ugly as with the handsome villagers without discrimination; spoke and laughed with every one at whatever they chose; and frequently played a ballad on the guittar, or related his travels. Such a silence did then prevail around us, that one could have heard the falling of a feather. the company sat gaping on the benches, and hardly dared to fetch breath before the tale was concluded; the consequence of which was, that these poor people parted with us with weeping eyes, or ran a quarter of a mile after us, on our departure.

At Blois we happened to meet the Duke of B*****, and gave occasion to that proud Briton, who thought to carry every thing by the weight of his purse, to make a very mortifying experience. Having arrived early in the morning, we determined

mined to take a ride after dinner, and to survey the environs of the town. The Duke arrived, not long before our return, with two coaches, two valets, seven or eight giant-like servants, and two led-horses. The landlady, who was preparing our supper, hesitated a while whether she should admit the proud Peer with his numerous retinue, notwithstanding the display of his guineas, as she could foresee that he would give her so much trouble that she should not be able to enjoy our society. At length she gave the keys of the apartments to the waiter, and ordered him to shew the Duke up. The purse-proud Nobleman being used to be received with the greatest respect at the inns, was astonished to see himself ushered in by the waiter, the landlady being just occupied to prepare a rice cream, which Count S*****i had ordered; and the landlord gone in quest of a bottle of *Vin de la Cote*, which my friend had wished to have.

The

The Duke took, however, possession of his apartments, and suddenly a dreadful noise arose in the yard. Our two servants had been watering their horses, while the Duke's people had quartered theirs in our stable, which appeared to them to be more commodious, and better than the rest. Our trusty esquires were astonished to find, on their return, the receptacle of their beasts occupied by new inhabitants; and having not the least inclination to be dislodged, Antonio dismounted silently, with all possible Spanish grandezza, led the intruders into the yard, and put his horses in possession of their former station, in presence of all the servants, who were struck with astonishment on seeing the beasts of an English Peer treated thus disrespectfully, and dislodged by two miserable hacks, as they were pleased to call them.

Their indignation soon broke out into dreadful curses; and they asked Alfonso, with kindling rage, how he dared to remove

move the horses of an English Lord. A loud laugh was the only answer my servant returned. He locked the stable, and having put the key coolly into his pocket, was going to step into the house. The Duke's servants seeing themselves treated with so much disrespect, grew furious; and the contest soon became so clamorous and warm, that the Peer, hearing the voices of his people, opened the window of his bed-chamber, and desired to know the cause of their quarrel. Being informed of Alfonso's temerity, he ordered him, in a domineering accent, to deliver up the key, and to put his horses into another stable. The servants exulted already at their supposed victory; but Alfonso pleaded, with the greatest civility, his prior claims to the stable, and declared that he rather would lose his life than give up the key. The Peer being highly exasperated at his obstinacy, ordered his servants to take it from him by force; and his people having only waited for the signal

nal of attack, fell furiously upon poor Alfonso. The honest fellow being assailed by seven strong and lusty men, saw no other expedient of saving the key, than to throw it into an open window, which went into the kitchen where the landlady was busily occupied with the Count's rice cream.

She had been amused already for some time by the scene which was acting under her window, and secretly applauded Alfonso's spirited conduct. He possessed, like my friend S*****i, a secret charm to ingratiate himself with all the landladies we met with on our journey; and our hostess no sooner saw him fling the key into the kitchen, than she took it for a signal to come to his assistance, and instantly armed herself with her largest skimmer to terminate the contest. She was firmly resolved to hit a sound blow at the lusty fellow who had seized her dear Alfonso by the collar, when the landlord appeared on the field of battle, carrying the bottle

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H

with

the costly wine, which he had got at last, after numberless fruitless inquiries, triumphantly under his arm. He was instantly informed of the cause of the contest in a most clamorous manner, and hastened with his yoke-mate to poor Alfonso's relief.

The Duke's servants being more desirous to get the key into their possession than to vent their vengeance against my man, had already unhanded him, when they came up with them, without having done him any other harm than beating a hole into his head as large as a shilling. It may easily be conceived what a terrible clamour our landlady raised when she beheld the broken head of her favourite. "Good god! what will the dear gentlemen say on their return!" she exclaimed ever and anon. "Holy Peter! how they will be enraged!" Mean time, one of the Duke's servants attempted to get into the house to fetch the key, which she no sooner perceived, than she hit him such a
4 dreadful

dreadful blow with her culinary weapon in the face, that the poor fellow staggered back with a roaring yell.

The Duke now ordered his people to desist from all further contention ; for although he was an Englishman, yet he did not possess a large share of that undaunted courage for which his countrymen are renowned ; and having learnt, by the exclamation of the landlady, that Alfonso had a master, which till then had not come into his Lordship's mind, he thought it prudent to proceed with less violence. The hostess did, however, no sooner espy him at the window, than she let loose the reins of her tongue, thinking him to be the chief cause of that incident. She read such a lecture to the Englishman on the impudence of his people, as he probably never had heard before. Her husband too, who was not in the habit of agreeing with his loving spouse, was of the same opinion with her, declaring that the stable could be parted with for *no price*.

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The Duke thinking the honour of his nation was at stake, looked upon this Philippic as a challenge to throw some guineas out of the window: however, that indelicate expedient only served to exasperate the host more violently; yet he contented himself with kicking them indignantly aside, and proceeded to the Duke's apartment, to remonstrate with him on his conduct. The latter was, by our host's obstinacy, inflamed with such an eagerness of getting possession of the stable, that he offered a considerable sum of money; and at last threatened to quit the house immediately. But neither the one nor the other made the least impression upon the headstrong landlord; and the Peer was, at length, obliged to drop the contest, because he knew that he could not get post-horses before the next day, and apprehended that he should find no accommodation in another inn.

The host was just going to quit the apartment, when the Duke perceived the
bottle

bottle he carried under his arm. He inquired after the name of the wine, and it happened unfortunately to be his Lordship's favourite liquor. He began, therefore, to make new offers; but the host was equally inexorable: nay, he was even so malicious as to extoll the deliciousness of the wine to the skies; adding, that he had found it extremely difficult to get a bottle of it, and that he would take no price for it. The Duke inquiring after the reason of such strange behaviour, the host, who was impatient to display his attachment to the Count, enumerated our merits in a most hyperbolical manner, and laid a particular stress on the description he was pleased to give of our noble spirit and bravery. "These two gentlemen do, indeed, travel in a simple and unexpensive manner," he concluded: "however, I will be hanged if they are not two foreign princes who travel incognito." These words had the desired effect on the Duke: he now began seriously to think that his

heat had misled him to commit a very foolish action, and asked the landlord, with visible perplexity, how he thought Alfonso could be indemnified best. The landlord shook his head, declaring, that he was afraid it could not be done by money; and an attempt which the Duke made to that purpose confirmed his supposition. We returned from our excursion in the moment the landlord had finished his parley. The Duke was at the window, and seemed to be astonished at the majestic appearance of the Count, whose uncommonly beautiful horse was prancing in the yard. The noble animal was of a high mettle, and gave his rider an opportunity of displaying his skill in horsemanship. Mean-while the landlady came running out of the house to seize the reins of the horse, thinking the Count was in danger; and Alfonso, whose head was bound up, was close at her heels. We dismounted; and seeing a number of
strange

strange servants in the house, could partly guess at the affair.

Having patiently listened to the minute account of our kind landlady, we found that it was of a complexion which made it necessary we should wait upon his Lordship immediately. He received us with an incredible perplexity, which he strove to conceal as much as possible. My address was very short; and, without mentioning our names, or inquiring for his, I asked him what sort of satisfaction he meant to give to my servant for the ill treatment of which he had been the principal cause? He started some difficulties; but at length grew more reasonable, begging my pardon; and we parted with mutual civility.

We frequently met with similar instances; for the vanity of men is greater than their desire for gain. We had entirely divested ourselves of our rank and dignity; and without abandoning, only for a moment, that elegance of deportment which

H 4

always

always distinguishes a man of noble birth and a good education, flattered the passions and prejudices of every one. *Little* friends ought not to be slighted, as well as petty enemies; and we frequently received the greatest services from people of whom we had not expected the smallest kindness. The innkeepers and their people rivalled every where to treat us as well as possible: the less we required, and the more satisfied we seemed to be with what they could give us, the more did they exert themselves to render us every kind of service, and to anticipate our wishes; the consequence of which was, that we never had any reason to complain of the insolence and the imposition of the landlords; and we were convinced, by repeated experience, that travellers generally have to accuse no person but themselves if they are not well treated by the innkeepers.

One evening we had already left Chartres far behind us, and approached a village, whose solitary, but romantic, situation
promised

promised us, if not a convenient, at least an agreeable, accommodation for the night. We had made it a rule to decline as much as possible from the high road, bending our course generally towards a village on the top of a rising eminence, or secluded from the rest of the world in a deep valley. There nature was purer, happiness more artless; the inhabitants were handfomer and more cordial; and the reception was kinder than in the neighbourhood of more cultivated manners.

And why did we travel? Was a static speculation, or the examination of the different degrees of morality, or of churches and steeples, or of bridges and edifices; were the fine arts, or any thing of that kind, the objects of our peregrination? Certainly not. If one is desirous to travel for that purpose, one must not stop long at Paris, where speculation finds such an ample scope, and where the finest products of art, and the objects of the most luxuriant physical and moral refinement are so numerous, that a resi-

dence of a twelvemonth at that gay capital blunts the senses and the mind almost entirely; takes away every relish for such objects, at least for a considerable time; and excites an irresistible desire to fly from that fatiguing bustle, and to rest the weary mind, and the fatiated senses, on the bosom of pure and artless nature. This was our aim, and constituted our sole pleasure.

The hamlet, which now hailed our eyes, seemed to consist only of a few houses; and reclined so artfully against the steep declivity of a rock, that it was almost perpendicularly suspended over a precipice. The eminence terminated, on both sides, in a plain, which was covered with a number of a fertile hillocks, and exhibited a variegated mixture of garden ground, meadows, and wood. Art seemed to have joined with nature to mix the colours in the most pleasing manner.

The sensations of the traveller chiefly depend upon trifles. Nothing, therefore,
produces

produces a more picturesque effect than the rising smoke of a solitary chimney concealed between a cluster of trees. Hunger, fatigue, and curiosity, lead us to form an idea conformable to the disposition of our imagination, or to the wants of the moment of the scene which is before us: we anticipate the enjoyment of every thing we expect to find, mould the faces into the form in which we wish to meet them, and reduce the circumstances to the shape that would be the most convenient to us. Nothing is truer than that not the enjoyment makes us happy, but its approach.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was Sunday when we arrived at the hamlet. All the inhabitants were assembled beneath a large wallnut-tree, and their joy was rather clamorous. One must have seen French peasants, to form an adequate idea of the scene which pre-

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sented

sented itself to our eyes. The oppressed and the poor generally abandon themselves to excesses whenever they can catch a moment of liberty, tranquillity, and superfluity; and the human heart, which much sooner is urged from one extreme to the other than cooled to moderation, destroys, without hesitation, a part of future pleasure, while it abandons itself to the rapid torrent of present gratification.

The young people danced, and the girls were adorned with autumnal flowers. Some branches composed charming huts, where we received refreshments spread on benches. Their whole orchestra consisted of a single fiddle, a tambourine, a fife, and a clarinet: however, the female dancers moved with so much agility and natural grace, that the eyes were indemnified for what the ears missed. We passed the dancers in a hard trot, being impatient to arrive at the inn which was on the other side of the hamlet. The curiosity of seeing us ride by, put a momentary stop to the
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the dance and the music, which began again, as soon as we were past, with the same unconstraint as if no observers were near. Our dress was soon changed: the Count put on a slight white night-gown: I followed his example; and thus accoutred, we went in our slippers to the dancing place, attended by our landlady, who gazed with visible delight at my friend's elegant form and graceful carriage. I also could not help making the same remarks I read on her countenance. He had the appearance of a king in disguise. His soft blue eye glittered with that tranquil majesty, which peacefully raised itself above the pressure of sorrows; his looks spoke the sweet language of general benevolence; and his colour, which commonly was rather pale, had been animated, by exercise and good humour, with a rosy hue, which was charmingly set off by the disorder of his brown hair. The noble grace of his gait, and of his whole carriage, easily could tempt one to believe that
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he was an inhabitant of Heaven's realms, who had left his celestial abode to bless the mortal race.

When we approached the dancing place, we observed some motions among the merry company. They seemed to consult how we should be received: however, we joined them with as much ease as if we had lived many years amongst them; saluted every one, and shook hands with those who were most contiguous to us. The little confusion our arrival had caused was thereby instantly dispelled; and when we told them that we wished to take a cordial share in their joy, they raised a loud shout of satisfaction. We were led to the best seat: the oldest of the happy circle offered us wine, figs, almonds, and grapes; and the music and dancing began anew.

Having refreshed ourselves sufficiently, we did not hesitate to mix with the dancers. The Count chose a partner; and I also had no difficulty to find one for myself.

self. The vanity which our charmers felt at that preferment, soon raised them above the reserve which is natural to the female sex; and the blushing, innocent damsels joined their hands cheerfully with ours. The Count's partner was a tall, jolly brunette; and I was coupled to a little, languishing girl. The former was by far too fiery for the character of her partner, and the latter too gentle for me; yet the beauty of their form, the simple, animated and well conducted dance, which unfolded their charms in the most advantageous manner, soon made us forget the reciprocal contrast of our dispositions.

Annette, the partner of my friend, had the finest shape I ever beheld; a small, pale face, full and rosy lips, and a round voluptuous chin. Her black eyes spoke, or, at least, would not speak, much that evening; for I remarked afterwards that they could be pretty eloquent. She sported with the innocent caresses of the poor Count, who seemed to be enchanted with her,

her, though he was not wont to brook female severity. He was probably so pliant at first merely for the sake of amusement, but at last his sentiments took a more serious turn.

Lucy, my fair partner, was Annette's younger sister, and quite the reverse of her; a little, languishing, puny being, of uncommonly fine limbs, and a most pliant make. Her soft eye, overshadowed with long, brown eye-lashes, seemed, indeed, not to be an entire stranger to roguish coquetry; yet it displayed more modest goodness than wantonness. It burned with a wish, with a secret desire, for a certain something, which she, perhaps, had no clear notion of, or at least, seemed never to have found as yet. Her bosom spoke the same language, as well as the blushes of her dimpled cheeks, when I pressed her little charming hand. Her feelings certainly were strong, and she only was at a loss how to express them. She had too little energy of body and of mind, and
for

for that reason, seemed not to be susceptible of a higher culture, as she indeed was sensible of the impression of the present moment, but did not retain it long.

We spent the evening in congenial, artless pleasure, frequently changed our partners, according to the established custom, but always returned to those our good fortune had bestowed upon us at first. The Count's charming impartiality forsook him at once, and I did not hesitate to imitate his example, impelled, as it were, by an unaccountable secret enchantment. If one has, or only imagines to have, received some pleasing sensual gratification, the first impression, the first taste, always predominates strongly among those that succeed it. There were at least twenty lovely figures among these little sweet country girls, that were prettier and more charming than our partners; however, we were almost entirely insensible to their beauty. The secret impulse that urged us to return to our charmers, cannot be called
love,

love, it rather was a strange sort of a nameless desire. The shape and the manners of the lovers inspired the rest with a jealousy which rather seemed to be owing to offended vanity than to a particular inclination towards us. The general good understanding was soon interrupted; the favoured fair ones indulged themselves with several little liberties; the rest did not care to disguise their indignation; and, besides, we were not the sole lovers of our partners. It was owing merely to the supposed superiority of our rank, which was confirmed by the noble carriage of the Count, that this general dissatisfaction did not break out: however, the silence which began to prevail around us rapidly increased every moment; the general inebriation of pleasure gradually vanished as one little troop separated itself by degrees from the rest; and those who were inspired with similar sentiments, retired at some distance in small groups, taking no farther share in our diversion.

Our

Our ladies, too, were sensible of our misconduct, and grew gradually more reserved; and we now were the only persons that did not observe it.

I was at length reminded of it by Alfonso, who, all the evening, had been a silent observer of our behaviour, without taking the least share in our diversions. I imparted his remarks secretly to the Count, and our eyes were opened at once. We now beheld ourselves and our partners entirely deserted by the company, and the rest dispersed in several groups. However, we neglected to make a proper use of that discovery, being diverted by the jealousy of the company; and, instead of behaving with more circumspection, encreased our caresses and our attention to our partners, which vexed their lovers in such a degree, that they drew nearer with glowing faces, and with looks which plainly told us that it was high time to discontinue our ungentleman-like sport.

Night

Night was, fortunately, setting in. The families broke up, and went to their respective homes, probably very little edified by the conclusion of their rural ball and our conduct. Annette and Lucy also were impatient to go home: we offered them our arms, and attended them to their house, amid the pretty audible hisses of those that had staid behind.

There are situations in human life in which we really seem to be controuled by some magic charm, of which the events of that evening were a speaking instance. All these humiliating consequences of our conduct, the cold civility of the old people, the scornful looks of the girls, the wry faces of the young men, and even the reserve and growing coldness of our charmers, were not sufficient to make us sensible of our foolish imprudence. The landlord and his dame, who, some hours before, had received us with so much kindness, and attended us, had also changed their looks very much on our return:

turn: even our servants convinced us, by their gestures, that they did not much admire our prudence. Every thing was, besides, in a confusion to which we were not accustomed, and which we had not yet experienced on our excursion. The horses had bad stabling, and not yet got their fodder: no supper was to be seen; and having, at length, put the people of the house in motion, our meal turned out so meagre and miserable, that we went to bed with empty stomachs. We now began, almost at one time, to rail at the people of the house, instead of looking for the cause of our disappointment in our conduct; and were so much infatuated as to curse and to threaten our host, to quarrel with our servants, to beat cats and dogs, and several times were very near falling out with each other before we went to our apartment.

On coming to our bed-chamber, an additional cause of dissatisfaction threw itself in our way; only one spare bed being, unfortunately,

unfortunately, in the house. This inconvenience would, indeed, not have given us the least uneasiness at any other time, either of us taking it rather as a favour to be suffered to sleep on a chair if the bed happened to be too small to contain both. But now, neither would resign the bed to the other; and, after a long and warm contention, we squeezed ourselves at length into the narrow compass of our uncomfortable couch. Yet we were incapable of getting a wink of sleep, tossing ourselves from one side to the other, and murmuring alternately at our miserable situation. We had the additional misfortune to be almost suffocated by an intense heat, which, at length, drove me out of the bed. I began to walk up and down in the room, and the Count soon followed my example, stepping to the window, and inhaling the fresh night air.

“What the D——! does that mean?” he exclaimed at once, starting suddenly back. “Look, Carlos, what a numerous crowd

crowd gathers under our window." I hastened to him, and actually beheld about twenty young people before our door, but could discern nothing else, the night being very dark. We now began to guess and to conjecture what could be the meaning of that assemblage, and naturally concluded that it must have some connection with the incidents at the dancing place. I was violently enraged at the insolence of our nocturnal visitors; but Count S*****i, whose good humour returned at once, began to laugh. This inflamed me still more vehemently; and, instead of being pacified by his unconcern, I apprehended some danger. I fetched, therefore, our pistols; and having made every preparation for a vigorous defence, was going to awake our servants. Count S*****i was, however, more prudent than myself, and stopping me at the door, with a loud laugh, said, "Don't put yourself into a passion; I will lay any thing that their whole drift is nothing but
a miserable

a miserable frolic. Don't spoil the pleasure of these poor fellows, but rather let us divert ourselves at their expense."

The event proved that he was not mistaken; for we were, after a few minutes, regaled with an excellent serenade, whose harmony soon informed us of its meaning. The effect this charming concert had on my risibility was so powerful, that I could not have resisted an immoderate fit of laughter if it had cost me my life. The music could certainly not be called a symphony; however, so much is certain, that the most horrid notes were borrowed from all instruments to produce a kind of chorus. As much as I could distinguish, some horns were the principal instruments; and it may easily be conceived how charmingly they were blown: a fiddle, with only one string, two or three rattles, a damaged trumpet, some little drums, and three or four kettles, accompanied the performers who played those agreeable instruments; and some small French whistles,

whistles, which are used to call the flocks together, in the neighbourhood of which one is in danger to lose one's hearing for ever, completed, by their shrill notes, the harmony of the whole. Several other instruments I did not know; however, the whole concert was of such a nature, that it would have been able to resuscitate the dead, and to reduce nervous people to the brink of the grave.

We were amused for some time: however, the Count took, at length, a pocket pistol out, and having extracted the ball, fired it over their heads. It caused a louder report than I had expected, and the music was silenced in an instant. The young gentlemen, who had not conceived the most distant idea of the serious consequences which might attend their frolic, did not think proper to finish their serenade, and left us suddenly to our reflections.

The Count continued to laugh immoderately, and I was infected by his merry

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humour.

humour. "It would be excellent sport," he exclaimed, "if we could dispossess these fellows of their pretty little girls. I would give any thing." I was entirely of his opinion, protesting that nothing could be more pleasant. Our vexation at our disastrous circumstances had divided us, and the resentment these very circumstances created united us again. We now consulted about the means of effecting our purpose, and soon hit upon measures which promised us success.

The execution of our plan was more successful at first than we had expected, as the final issue of it was more unfortunate and mortifying than we ever could have imagined. The young people had again a dance the next evening; and we prepared the whole hamlet, during the day, for our behaviour on that occasion. We were as gentle as doves, and seemed to be good-nature and condescension itself; wandered through the hamlet, paying very little attention to the girls; joked with the
young

young men, and were serious in the company of the old ones; flattered the mothers, and treated the daughters with cold civility. When we entered a house, we were received with frigid reserve and sour looks, but pleasure and good-will beamed in the eye of every inmate when we left it: our salutes were returned with cordiality; every one was charmed with our conduct; and every thing changed in our favour. Yet we were too much exasperated as to drop our design, and impatient to be revenged for the treatment we experienced last night.

Our behaviour in the evening was also entirely changed. We betrayed not the least desire to mix with the dancers, but associated with the old peasants, discoursed of the vintage, made our observations on the wind and the clouds, presaged the weather, and pretended to know the meaning of the croaking of the frogs. The gaping peasants were astonished at the striking change of our behaviour, and

listened so eagerly to our discourses, that here and there a pipe dropt on the ground. Every recollection of the events of the preceding night seemed to be obliterated, and the listening circle, that stood around us, encreased with every minute. The Count sang and played on the guittar; and I relieved him at intervals by the relation of wonderful incidents, and of ludicrous anecdotes. The dance ceased, and the girls too assembled around us; however, we took little notice of them.

Annette and *Lucy* were struck with astonishment at our behaviour with regard to themselves. They were dressed in their best apparel, and their disappointment was legibly written on their countenance. *Annette* affected to be entirely indifferent to the Count's inattention to her person, and strove to be extravagantly merry: *Lucy*, on the contrary, scarcely could retain her tears; and the more her sister exerted herself to make the company burst with laughter, the more frequently did she
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take her pocket handkerchief out to wipe her eyes.

Not the least of these circumstances escaped our observation, and our looks frequently met those of our offended fair ones; yet nothing was able to make the smallest impression on our obdurate hearts: they were obliged to go home unattended; and we returned to the inn, accompanied by almost all the inhabitants of the hamlet, who seemed to adore us.

No sooner were we left to ourselves, than we broke out in a fit of laughter, congratulating ourselves mutually on our excellent talents for hypocrisy, deceit, and courtly disguise, as well as on the impression we flattered ourselves to have made on the hearts of our charmers. We really had appeared more to our advantage to day than the evening before in our night gowns and slippers. The Count was dressed in his uniform, which, indeed, did not become him half so well as his white night gown: the buttons of his mi-

linary drefs were, however, fo bright, and the rich embroidery of his coat was fo refulgent, that every 'look was attracted by the fplendor of his external appearance, which-received additional charms by the bloom of health blufhing on his cheeks, and the fparkling luftre of his eyes. Love, unblended with any kind of ambition, is, befides, rather unnatural; and the latter is frequently the father of the former.

The next morning we converfed, in the prefence of our landlord, on the happinefs a constant refidence at fuch a charming fpot, and with fuch good-natured people, muft afford. Our hoft now afsumed a very fly look, affuring us that he was not fo ignorant of the ftate of our hearts as we perhaps imagined, and declaring that he would do as much as lay in his power to put us in poffeffion of the two girls whom we had found fo charming the firft evening, provided we were willing to marry them. He added, they were
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the richest in the village, each of them possessing a large farm of her own; and we might be sure of success, if we would avail ourselves of his interposition, as he was their uncle and godfather, and had a great influence on the family.

I feigned to be astonished at his sagacity, replying, in my and in the Count's name, that he had completely guessed the real state of our hearts, and that we should avail ourselves of his kind offer as soon as we perceived that the girls were favourably inclined to us; mean-while we wished to hire a small farm for some time.

We were fortunate enough to have the choice of two, and hired that which required the least labour; because neither the Count nor myself was over fond of too much exertion, but knew how to set a proper value on ease and convenience. It was, however, requisite we should act the part of farmers in the highest perfection possible; and while we exerted ourselves to the utmost of our power to do honour

to our new station, we actually incurred the danger of being rusticated. I do not know what opinion S*****i entertained of me with regard to that point; however, his behaviour gave me just reason for thinking thus of him. He could easily accommodate himself to almost any situation; and its character, which he appropriated to himself, soon became completely natural to him. He pressed, as it were, the essence out of all scenes and circumstances of human life, and always found something agreeable in the enjoyment thereof. Ere long, his borrowed character grew habitual with him; and he never left his assumed manners before they relinquished him, or a new situation required it.

I, on the contrary, did not so easily and so perfectly catch the spirit of a character. My disposition of mind, which always leads me back to the time past, and renders the gratification the present moment affords agreeable to me only as far as it harmonizes

harmonizes with the images of my fancy, embellished by the distance of time, renders every situation very soon irksome to me. Being averse to yield to the alluring charms of novelty, it gains some gratification only by a long continued study of an object, and therefore approaches it only slowly. But not one moment of human life is alike to the other; the events we experience, and our notions, are eternally fluctuating and changing; and the moment in which I begin to grow sufficiently intimate with the existing circumstances, is generally the period in which I commence a new existence.

I acted, therefore, my part a good deal worse than the Count, who found it very convenient to attend personally the pasture of his flock; to adorn his hat and bosom with ribbons and flowers; to dine beneath a spreading lime-tree, to blow a melting air on the flute, or to compose the most heart-breaking pastorals. It was, however, very unfortunate, that the fine season

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was

was already past; a flower was a rarity; not one human being heard his plaintive strains; and his verses, which favoured already of the winter, were generally obliged to be thawed before the kitchen fire along with their author, before they were palatable; and were lost to the world, and to immortality, because no person heard them but myself.

I took care of the internal economy of our house; and, with the two servants, fed and milked the cows, and prepared our meals. We three seemed to prefer having a good joint of meat in the pot, and a prospect of a substantial dinner, to hunting for rhimes all the day long. When the Count returned, and had properly arranged his ideas, he began to speak with enthusiasm of the graces of poetry, and of the celestial, immortal fire of love. His character had received some fatal lunatic spots from the reading of some German novels, and his fancies more frequently breathed an odour of the grave than of sound sense.

sense. Heaven knows how it came that I never was more materially disposed than at that period. I rather endured than coincided with his fine sentiments. If the morning was serene and pure, my feelings were neither more nor less elevated than those of the brute creation: when the moon shone bright, I could, indeed, rejoice for half an hour at her silvery orb; and a sweet melancholy, now and then, stole upon me; but, instead of shedding sentimental tears, I took my gun or a net, to shoot a good bird or to catch fish, assisted by her deceiving flight.

Being occupied and diverted by labour, allured by no temptation, and safe from the corruptive poison of idleness, my heart seemed, at that time, to be as healthy as my body. I can, indeed, not deny that a certain lady of the capital of France attended me sometimes in my little occupations. She was, however, rather gay and cheerful than gloomy and sad; and, what was still more agreeable, came

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always

always in the company of a third person. I thought very little of *Lucy* and her whole tribe, but nevertheless lent always, after our meals, a patient ear to the Count's amorous complaints, laughing inwardly at my friend, that he was such a fool to fall thus violently in love.

As for our sociable life, it was regulated in the following manner: In the week every one was hard at work; for our hamlet was poor, and the inhabitants lived upon the scanty produce of their agriculture, pasturage, vintage, and the making of wooden spoons. The time lying very heavy upon my hands for want of society, I employed my idle hours in the fabrication of the latter article, and improved so rapidly, that I soon was famed in the whole hamlet for making the finest wooden spoons. I had learned, in Germany, to make baskets, and now exercised that art also in great perfection. When I was sitting in the yard bending osiers, then it grew frequently lighter in my soul than at
any

any other time; I smiled cheerfully at the time past, and was highly sensible that nothing in the world smooths the path through life so much as constant occupation and labour, which leaves no scope for idle speculation.

This predominant propensity for activity, which, being intimately connected with my nature, has frequently urged me, in the course of my life, to commit the most adventurous follies, made me stiffer, and less sociable, than the Count was rendered by his poetical idleness. When he returned from his pastoral world with his cows and his sheep, he usually was in such a good humour, and his imagination was so bright and active, that every object presented itself to him in a rosy-coloured light; and his rapture knew no bounds when he had succeeded in being happily delivered of some fine poem, or had seen his shepherdes, and received a kind look from her. He almost choaked me with his enthusiastic extravagancies; and when

I shewed

I shewed him a fine spoon I had made, or a neat basket which I had finished, he left me suddenly, ran through the whole hamlet, knocked at every window where he saw a light, disturbed our neighbours in their sleep, tired them with his unseasonable discourses, found every where wit, sound sense, simplicity, and honesty, honoured, at last, his mistress with a ballad of the time of Henry IV. or of Lewis XI. and persuaded her he had composed it for her that very day. When I returned with my gun or net, I generally went for him to her house, or delivered him from the teeth of some mastiffs, who could not conceive what business he could have in the street at so late an hour.

He made, however, excellent progress in his courtship. Annette had already confessed to him that she loved and preferred him to the rest of her lovers; and nothing but the marriage ceremony debarred him from the completion of his happiness. This was, however, a point with

with respect to which the Count possessed as little of the spirit of cosmopolitism as myself; for he professed the just principle, that, as a man of the world could not be certain to be happy *with* his lady, one ought to take care to get something along with her, that at least would make some atonement for disappointments which might happen, and sweeten the bitterness which oftentimes is mixed in the cup of matrimonial bliss.

I was not so successful in my love, for which I probably had to thank nobody but myself; for while the fiery fair ones *seem* to make great pretensions, those of a gentler disposition *actually* demand a great deal. They do not easily forget little neglects, resent every fault one commits, and reflect at home on what one imagines to have been forgot in a moment. A great propensity for an easy and quiet life has always been a predominant stricture of my character, notwithstanding its restlessness; and my gallantry to the ladies was seldom carried

carried to a very high degree, if my heart did not, of its own accord, urge me to tender those flattering assiduities that commonly are held to be the criterion of a fervent love.

Lucy profited, therefore, very little by my passion. I did, indeed, occasionally play a little air on the flute under her window at night, or danced twice with her on a Sunday, when the other damsels had that honour only once; or if I could get a nosegay without much difficulty, I presented it to her, entwined with a blue ribbon, in a basket of my own workmanship. I also told her sometimes, in the most elegant manner, if she was alone, and seemed to wish for it, that she was as beautiful as an angel, that I adored her, and that it depended entirely upon her to be beloved by me for ever. If I was in an uncommonly good humour, I even ventured to steal a kiss, and to repeat the sweet theft if she was angry at my boldness. This was, however, all I did for her. My rusticated
phlegm

phlegm did not suffer me to venture farther. The fervour of the first evening had been damped by the serenade; and I should have been vexed to death at our foolish frolic, if I had not been diverted by the cares attending my culinary and domestic employment.

It was, at bottom, nothing but kindness for the Count that prompted me to await patiently the conclusion of our whimsical farce; for love appeared to me, at that time, to be nothing else but an occupation fit only for idle people. The work I had on my hand quickened the circulation of my blood, enlivened my ideas, and rendered them more healthy, which enabled me to improve considerably, in that situation, in the true philosophy of life.

Unfortunately, our pleasure did not last much longer. The hamlet was too far remote from the high-road than that its inhabitants could have attained a great knowledge of the gallantry of the nation.

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It was, therefore, the custom with them to marry first, and then to commence to make love. The servants had, besides, not been over-careful to conceal our rank; and we had rendered ourselves very suspected the first night. The father of the two girls being heartily tired of the trouble of guarding their virgin treasure, and seeing their former lovers relinquish them, applied frankly to the Count, desiring him to declare whether we would marry his girls or not. S*****i wanted to pacify him by an evasive answer and vague excuses: however, the farmer declared he perceived the drift of our courtship, and knew very well that it was impossible a serious alliance between ourselves and his daughters could ever take place; desiring him, at the same time, in the politest manner, never to enter his house again, nor to appear under the window, if he did not choose to expose himself to disagreeable accidents. My poor friend really was seized with despair; for although he

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had no mind to marry, yet he was violently in love with his charmer. He now told the fields his sorrows, and the echo repeated his desponding complaints. The moon and the stars were most ruefully invoked to witness his tears and his despair. His amorous fury and grief were, however, only poetical. He did, indeed, rove the fields, abscond himself in the most solitary recesses of the wood, gaze wildly at the waterfalls, and conjure the chilling autumnal gales, which only the absence of all feeling could mistake for Zephyrs, to waft his sighs and amorous complaints to his cruel Phyllis.

I was not displeased at that unfavourable turn of our affairs: and if the girls only had been a little more of our party, this would have afforded the finest opportunity for adventures. My healthy blood spoke of nothing but of murder and elopement. Opposition made me enterprising; and I could have torn our faithless inamoratas from the bosom of their parents, and carried them

them to the most distant parts of the globe. But the misfortune was, that the girls were not at all disposed to clope; and I laughed, at last, at myself and the Count, and resolved to attempt his conversion to found sense.

I never performed a good work with less difficulty; for he soon began to laugh at himself and me. He coincided with my humour, and we began publicly to act the furious lovers. We quarrelled every day with the father of the girls, and not a night passed without a serenade under their window. The whole hamlet was put into an intestine commotion, and divided in different parties. A deputation appeared, at length, at our farm, and requested us respectfully to depart in peace. This was just what we wanted: we yielded, therefore, generously to their humble request, settled our affairs, sold our cows and sheep, paid our rent, and departed laughing, highly elated by the ridiculous termination of our frolic.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VIII.

I FORBEAR troubling my readers with an enumeration of the changes that little adventure, which, at bottom, was a mere nothing, produced in my character. They will be perceived, without my assistance, in the sequel of my history. The chief effect it produced was a growing coldness to Caroline. A fluctuation with regard to this point too, in which I had, till then, displayed a firmness that reflected honour on my character; a sudden breaking from a kind of mental sleep, a strong internal ebullition, fleeting sensations, hazarded professions, a high degree of activity, and a subsequent state of apathy, made me dream, then urged me again to hunt eagerly after peace and happiness, and, when I imagined to have found them, to throw them away suddenly. The enthusiasm arising from a quicker circulation of the blood was past; and

and I now commence that period in which an unsatisfied internal sense, an ardent desire for activity, begins to stir, and at length relapses again into its former dormant state.

The gay periods of my life are now on the verge, and my career grows more serious. The wanton sports of an exuberant imagination are on the decline; and the reader soon will behold the birth of a new love, great and sacred, glowing and powerful, without any nourishment for the senses, new-moulding my whole character, dispelling its shades, raising the lustre of its brighter parts, artless and omnipotent. The vicious spirit of an abominable confederation purifies itself in its genial fire; and moments are dawning in which the veil of mortality drops before me, and my spirit soars beyond the confines of humanity.

I cannot conceive how it came that, after this incident, I found my disposition not quite so cloudless as before, every gratification

tification being blended with a greater degree of care, and joy and gaiety less benevolently smiling upon me. I relapsed into serious contemplations; and although I was neither dissatisfied nor melancholy, yet I could, notwithstanding the circumspection with which I continually watched over myself, never recover that cheerful station from which that ludicrous adventure had expelled me. I was constantly obliged to spur myself to activity; and I am almost inclined to believe that my taste, and my notions of tranquillity and happiness, were entirely changed.

I was, as it were, gradually prepared for the impending period of my adventures: a serious, but inviting, shade spread itself over every object that came in my way; and I felt as if I returned from the serene luxury of an exuberant and gay landscape, to the melancholy, sweet night of a fragrant grove carpeted over with aromatic flowers, and animated with the plaintive notes of the solitary nightingale.

nightingale. Former scenes of joy, and the heart-expanding retrospect of the past events of my life, now represented themselves to my mind, and absorpt me in sweet reveries. I enjoyed neither the essence nor the external of those events, but only the sentiments and notions which they produced and nurtured in my soul.

The Count either was infected by me; or a different cause had, perhaps, produced the same effect. He spoke less, and was more frequently absorpt in serious reflections. Formerly he had now and then, and always with success, trusted to hazard; but now he consulted carefully with himself before he attempted any thing, and the consequence constantly turned out unfavourable. It was very natural that he was not disposed to ascribe the cause of this phenomenon to himself, for he found it without difficulty in the capricious humour of fickle Fortune. He was sullen and gloomy whenever he could find an excuse for being so; and my altered looks
always

always afforded him a palpable plea for relapsing in that cheerless humour.

Do the events of human life really follow a pre-delineated trait, or does chance sometimes produce oddly united circumstances? Our minds were, indeed, now and then, cheered by lucid and pleasing intervals. Our good humour frequently made ample amends, in an hour, for what we had neglected in the course of several days, when we were refreshed by a sound sleep, if the morning was clear, not too cold, and neither wind nor snow troubled us on the road, which was less frequently the case the nearer we approached the south of France. The most important morning of my life was also the finest I recollect ever to have seen; my mind too partook of the serenity of the sky.

January was already on the verge; and the winter having been as mild as spring, summer seemed to be drawing near. The almond trees were already high in blos-

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som,

fom, and the shrubs began to be invested with a leafy verdure. The olive woods, with their unfading green, embosomed already every where germinating wheat-fields; and the lark, the harmonious herald of the morn, strained its warbling throat to welcome the approach of the fine season. The returning spring carries along with it a genial warmth, which diffuses itself through body and mind; every gentle gale breathes an animating spirit; the mystic humming in the air, and the almost visible growth of the budding plants, produces a symbol of a cheerful resurrection. And when we behold again, for the first time, a flower, and the sunbeams gleam through the young leaves, our heart is thrilled with a heavenly rapture, and our language is too poor to do justice to our feelings.

A secret pulsation in my blood, a mystic unaccountable pressure against my panting heart, a sudden stop of the gentle stream of my thoughts, frequently disturbed the
peace

peace of my mind on that heavenly morning. Every thing around me seemed to be animated with nameless beings; the mystic sounds which pervaded the forest, the fluctuating of the sun-beams in the rising vapours, the sparkling dew-drops gliding from one leaf upon the other, the current streams of vernal warmth, formed in my busy imagination a smiling picture, without colour, without a distinct contour and centre. The whole was attended with a certain obscure presension, with an ominous, though unintelligible, meaning; and some mystic certainty lurked in my soul, without my daring to confide in it the reality of its existence. The beautifullest landscape hailed our enraptured looks: yet its beauty rather consisted in a secret charm which my soul, unknowingly and secretly, imparted to it, than in the sweet variegated mixture of its parts. On our right a beautiful country seat stretched extensive gardens and pleasure grounds over the contiguous chain of hills: smiling,

K 2

picturesque

picturesque groups of trees, and little neat cottages, descended from the declivity into the vale. A rosy-coloured morning vapour was still sweetly blended with the bluish colorit of the back-ground, and, where it was less intense, exhibited to our view some part of a village, the lower part of a rock, or trees whose tops towered above the vaporous ocean. The castle, whose scite we also could descry only partially, was not far distant; and the morning sun reflected with radiant splendor from its flaming windows. It was, with its light-green trees, fairy-like suspended in the misty back-ground.

We arrived at length at the park; and one of our servants (I do not recollect whether it was Alfonso, or that of the Count) began to repeat to us the information he had gathered from the landlord in whose house we had slept the preceding night, with regard to the Lord of the Manor. He was a misanthrope, secluded from the world by misfortunes, who educated

cated here a daughter famous for her uncommon beauty. Adelheid, Baronness of V*****], was the brightest ornament and the admiration of the whole province. She lived, however, a solitary life, having no intercourse with her neighbours; few had seen, and a still smaller number ever spoken to her.

This information agitated me in a singular manner. "V*****!]" I exclaimed: "have you heard right?"

"I cannot be mistaken, My Lord," he replied.

"The name is very familiar to me: should he, perhaps, be the father of V*****]?"

"Whose life you saved at G*****," Antonio interrupted me.

"The very person," I resumed. "I now recollect that he frequently has conversed with me of his father and sister; and I am certain he was a native of this province."

In that moment I rejoiced at my good deed. When I resided at G*****, that young man fell into the river. He could not swim, and was in danger of being drowned. I instantly plunged into the water, and was so fortunate to save his life. This was, indeed, no heroic action, as I was a good swimmer; and it had entirely flit my memory; but now I recollected it with pleasure.

I took; from that moment, a warmer interest in every object I beheld. The wall was low, and I could survey all the walks. "Perhaps (thought I) thou wilt meet young V*****! in the bosom of his family, happy and animated with friendship for thee."

I was profoundly absorbed in the pleasing sensations this idea created in my heart, when Count S*****i suddenly exclaimed, "Stop! Marquis: for Heaven's sake stop! You will instantly drop from your horse. Don't you perceive that your horse's girth has got loose?"

I stopped

I stopped to alight, the servants not being within call. However, he dismounted, exclaiming, with his amiable kindness, "Keep your seat: my saddle, too, wants to be tied faster." While he was employed to bind the girth faster, I made some motions to make it easier to him, and in the same moment my looks caught a white object in the park. My heart began violently to palpitate; a cold tremour pervaded my limbs; and I scarcely was capable to keep myself in the saddle.

A female being, of an heavenly form, walked in the park, within a small distance from the wall. She carried a book in one hand, and with the other screened her face against the dazzling rays of the sun, reflecting, as it seemed, upon what she had read. A little green straw-hat, fixed with a white ribbon beneath her chin, overshaded her long auburn tresses, which depended in beautiful ringlets upon her girdle: the morning breezes sported with her

white gown, which was tied round the waist with a green sash: her uplifted hand was whiter than the muslin from which it stole forth, and the roseate smile of health was diffused over her countenance. Her gown being unfortunately caught by a brier, she was obliged to remove her hand from her eyes to disentangle it; and having extricated her garment, her black eyes met me by accident. She started a little when she saw us so contiguous to her; a deeper hue blushed over her delicate face, and she cast her eyes suddenly to the ground, as if in search for something. My horse, whom I inadvertently had pricked with my spurs, began suddenly to bound; the Count called to me to be on my guard. She looked once more at me, growing as pale as ashes, and quickened her paces. I pacified my horse; and while she turned round a corner into another walk, she directed her beautiful eyes again at me; and in that moment the Count too observed her, exclaiming,

“ Eternal

“Eternal God!” It is impossible to say more to the praise of a beautiful object than these two words, the astonishment and the features of my friend expressed; and yet it was by far too little. My heart was thrilled with unutterable sensations, and an unknown something pervaded my whole frame.

I could not conceal the state of my heart, which expressed itself legibly on my countenance. The Count observed me awhile seized with speechless astonishment, and at last broke out in the words, "Poor G*****!" He perceived the growing passion; and knowing that my temper was too irritable than that I ever could be fortunate in love, wished to be able to destroy my passion in the bud. "But how shall I accomplish this?" he said to himself. "It is impossible her soul should entirely answer her external appearance. There is no possibility to prevent my poor friend from getting acquainted with her; I will, therefore, assist

K 5

him;

him; and if he sees himself disappointed in his sanguine expectations, the cure of his passion will soon be effected."

He told me, therefore, laughing, "I perceive, Marquis, I shall have an opportunity to act here the same part you undertook from friendship for me in our winter quarters." But apprehending his untimely joke would offend me, he added, in a soothing accent, "yet I hope, Carlos, you will repose confidence in me!" He accompanied these words with a hearty squeeze of his hand, which I returned cordially. Mean while we were arrived at the village, and dismounted at the inn. While I retired to a private apartment, to give audience to my thoughts, the Count mixed with the people of the house, and having made several inquiries concerning the Lord of the Manor, wrote the following note in my name, and sent it to the castle.

"The Marquis of G***** has had the honour to be intimately acquainted with a
Mr.

Mr. de V*****]. Having great reason to believe that Baron de V*****] is the happy parent of that excellent young man, he begs leave to pay his respects to the father of his friend."

His ambassador returned in the course of a few minutes with one of the Baron's servants, and a formal invitation for myself and the Count. Our horses were instantly taken out of the stable, and our servants desired to bring them with our portmanteaus to the castle. "You must be very intimate with the Baron, or strongly recommended to him," the landlord said to the Count, shaking his head.

The latter now came to my apartment, and finding me on the bed, absorbed in a profound reverie, said, "Will you not get up, Marquis? The Baron," he added coolly, "has just sent us an invitation to come to the castle."

"How! the Baron, did you say?" I exclaimed.

K 6

"Yes,

“ Yes, yes, the Baron,” he replied, smiling, and related his artifice to me. I pressed him to my bosom, transported with rapturous joy, and we went to the castle, but Heaven knows with what an anxiety on my part. My knees trembled, and my heart palpitated violently. I was obliged to take hold of my friend’s arm, lest our conductor should perceive my emotion by my gait. Whenever I looked at the windows of the castle, and saw the curtains move, I was violently agitated, my tongue trembled, and I could scarcely speak intelligibly. The attention of some servants, who stood at the gate, opening the folding doors on our approach, made the blood rush into my face; and I now began first to make the observation that our dress was very indifferent; for, to confess the truth, I had nothing on but a simple green hunting coat, and my hair was in the greatest disorder. I could not help communicating these remarks, in a whisper, to the Count. However, he
smiled,

smiled, replying, in German, "What a vanity! I assure you, you never have looked better!" We entered the castle, at length. A man, who appeared to be the butler, welcomed us with respectful politeness, informing us that he had orders to shew us to the drawing room, till his master was dressed. We were conducted to a spacious apartment, decorated with a number of portraits and other pictures. The servant having withdrawn, we began to examine the pictures. They were, probably, family pieces. I did, indeed, gaze at every one of them, but without the least attention, my mind being differently occupied. I admired, at length, even the frames of some, declaring the carving to be excellent, when the Count quickly replied, "Dear Marquis, if you are such an admirer of frames, then come, and look at this: I am sure you never saw a finer one." I went to the other side of the apartment where he was, and he exclaimed, again and again, "Is it possible
any

any thing could be more elegant than this frame?" "You are mistaken, dear Count; for the garland of yon picture is much more beautiful and elegant." "I am of a contrary opinion," he replied, laughing: "this is of a much better workmanship. Upon my honour the picture does not deserve such a beautiful frame." These words naturally made me look at the painting. I started back, seized with astonishment, when I beheld myself as if in a mirror. I instantly recollected to have been persuaded by young V*****, after his accident, to let him have that picture. Astonishment fettered my tongue; and I scarcely heard the Count say, "Faith, Marquis, you are grown much handsomer, or the painter has not done justice to your face."

No sooner had the Count pronounced these words, than a side door opened, and an old man, of a striking beauty, and an elegant carriage, entered the apartment. I bowed respectfully, and was going to
thank

thank him for his kind invitation, when he ran towards me, pressing me tenderly to his bosom.

“ I know you, Don Carlos,” he added; “ and the discovery you have made just now saves me a farther elucidation. You have preserved my son’s life; receive the grateful effusions of a father’s heart; but, at the same time, lament with me his untimely death.” With these words a torrent of tears gushed down his cheeks.

“ Gracious Heaven!” I exclaimed, kissing the tears from his cheeks, “ is it possible?” A violent emotion, which had been preparing all the morning, and only had waited for a pretext of growing loud, interrupted me here. A copious stream of tears relieved my heart; I pressed him to my bosom, and reclined my face on his shoulder.

“ Yes, you are quite that sensible, excellent man,” he resumed, “ whose picture my son has so frequently drawn to us with enthusiastic warmth. Alas! his fate en-
vied

vied him the happiness of seeing you once more. He went into the army some years since; a few months ago he was thrown off his horse, and died of the fall." Here he paused a few moments, and then continued, "Yet you have lost nothing by his death; the son's friendship for you has devolved to the father. I do not love mankind; yet I wish you would accept of his place in my heart, and bestow, at least, a part of your affection for my unhappy boy upon his father." It was very natural that I replied I had loved him long since, and that I would endeavour to deserve his kind opinion. He now left me reluctantly, turning to the Count. I told him his name; and it fortunately happened that he was an intimate friend of the Baron in his younger years. Our reverend host was rejoiced to renew an old acquaintance, and we began soon to converse so cordially as if we had known one another for years, and were members of the same family.

Having

Having spent about half an hour in the most agreeable manner, the Baron said to me, "I now will conduct you to my daughter, who has seen you already this morning, and instantly recollected your features. You see," he added, smiling, "how strongly your image is imprinted on our hearts."

"Our affairs are in an excellent train!" the Count whispered to me, while our kind host opened the door.

"Here, Adélheid, I bring you the friend of our Adolf!" the Baron said, on our entering his daughter's apartment. "He has promised me to be my son and your brother."

The sweet girl sat upon the sofa, holding a book in her hand. She laid it down on our entrance, and rose to meet us. She had exchanged her green hat with a ribbon of the same colour, and her bosom was adorned with a white rose. The rest of her dress was nearly the same as in the morning; her hair was in the same charming

ing disorder, and a miniature picture depended from her swelling bosom. It was a manly face; but fortunately I thought that it was the picture of her brother.

An amiable confusion blushed on her beautiful countenance. My secret agitation did, indeed, render me very unfit for close observation: yet I perceived in her timid looks, and on the faint blushes of her dimpled cheeks, certain symptoms which gave nourishment to my hopes.

An innocent girl is chiefly swayed by instinct, when she meets the man whom her artless heart has chosen without being conscious of it. The most consummate art could not have invented a more charming reception than simple nature effected here. The visible tremour which glided through her frame was a silent confession that something more than the request of her father prompted her to do what she did afterwards. Her heart spoke through her looks, though it was afraid of being understood. The image, and, if I do not flatter -

flatter myself too much, the beautified image, of her secret dreams was led into her arms by her own father, to cherish it as a brother. But who can force the human heart not to overstep the limits prescribed by parental authority?

The father did not understand his daughter completely. He imagined that she did not answer his wishes, and his tenderness for me, as much as he had expected. "How!" said he, "does Adelheid thus coldly receive the friends of her father, and her second brother?" Her looks could, however, have made him sensible of his mistake; they intreated for indulgence, and at the same time made the sweetest confession. He smiled benevolently at her confusion; and encircling his daughter with his arm, pressed her to my bosom, requesting me to embrace my sister. Her cheeks burned, and my lips quivered. This was all that I was able to observe.

I now

I now led her to her sofa, presenting the Count to her; and she returned his courtly civility in a manner which betrayed the most accomplished education. I now was more at leisure to make observations, and my eager soul was absorpt in the contemplation of her exquisite charms. I had travelled much, and seen a great many beautiful women; I even had possessed a wife adorned with heavenly charms; and my imagination added to her image, which was deeply engraven in my soul, perfections which the original, perhaps, never had; but here my boldest dreams were more than realized; I frequently doubted that I was awake.

Her soul, which soon recovered its wonted flight, to unfold all its perfections, enchanted me irresistibly by its romantic turn. I never should have thought it possible that such pure and just notions of human life could be treasured up in that beautiful mind, which evidently had received rather a singular turn. Even the prejudices of education, the national notions

notions of her country, and the frailties of the human heart, had, either by accident, or by an innate talent, given birth to adorable virtues. What an angelic heart was here to gain!

A walk in the garden being proposed, she took hold of my arm with the innocent familiarity of a sister; stopped at her favourite spots, and informed me, with an enchanting simplicity, where she sometimes had thought of me. "Don't be angry, dear Marquis," she added, "if I now and then, perhaps, have intruded upon your dreams by an obscure omen; for I really believe that this is possible; and Adolf repeated your name constantly towards the end of his life."

How swiftly did the hours elapse in the company of that angel! The Count, who was elated with joy at my happiness, completely accommodated himself to the nature of her ideas, and in a short time spoke in the same enthusiastic strain that was so peculiar to her. Adelheid found him

him very amiable, and told it him without reserve. I was several times in danger of giving way to jealousy ; yet she always reconciled me again by the tenderness she evinced for me, and by numberless little endearments. The father took an artless and cordial share in the innocent flow of our spirits. The first rapture of joy was, however, of no long duration.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Baron had made us promise, the first evening after our arrival, to stay some weeks with him ; and these weeks were gradually extended to months. Adelheid's natural seriousness returned by degrees. The Baron was fond of hunting, notwithstanding his age and infirmity ; it being likewise the favourite diversion of the Count, they were almost the whole day in the forest ; and I was fond of nothing. A small, well selected library did, indeed, agreeably fill up many of my hours ;

hours; yet still many dreadful chasms were left, and I was obliged to have recourse to walking to shake off the heaviness of time.

Adelheid being fond of exercise, we frequently met in the garden, where we were least disturbed. She seemed to have dedicated the morning so religiously to serious occupations, that I would have intruded upon her on no account. I was, besides, in a very anxious situation. I was sensible of her attachment to me; but could I venture to presume that this was any thing else than a sister's love?

As for myself, I loved her with an unspeakable ardour, with an uncommon patience, and an unexampled resignation. I was formerly too proud to receive laws from the female sex, but now saw myself at once reduced to the most obedient submission. A young girl directed the course of my thoughts at pleasure, and guided the current of my ideas. I had completely lost the dominion over myself, was

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unexpectedly

unexpectedly deprived of what formerly constituted my greatest pride, and there were hours when I shed tears at that loss.

The name of a sister entitled her to many innocent familiarities which transported me beyond myself. The language of friendship flowed from her lips, and I was sure her heart did not give them the lie; yet she never displayed one of those finer symptoms of a strong, over-powering passion; appeared to apprehend and to divine nothing; was always of the same temper, without either reserve or caprice. I did not know that there are female hearts of a nature different from that of the generality. What Adelheid had in common with the rest of her sex, with respect to love, I mistook for a peculiarity of all passions, and tormented myself with my own feelings at a time when I could have been completely happy.

We generally took a walk when the day began to decline. She took familiarly hold of my arm when we were alone; we rambled

rambled through different parts of the garden, and a large seat of turf, in the most distant corner, was commonly the spot to which we resorted at last. Adelheid always grew more serious, and at length even melancholy, when we approached it, and I was taken with the same mood. The compass of this world was too narrow for her soul; she gathered matter for new images in other regions: night stole upon us, and threw a deeper gloom over our dreams. A sweet melancholy frequently made us weep, without our being able to account for it. I was generally so much agitated, that the power of utterance failed me. She then reclined upon my shoulder, and looked at me with eyes full of benign tenderness. One evening, when we were in the same melancholy disposition, she took hold of my hand, and pressing it with affection, said, "Dear Carlos, the disposition of your sister renders her very unhappy: it would be very well if she were not to sojourn much longer in this world. But

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would

would you then continue to remember me; and do you think you will know me again in another world?"

This and similar scenes overwhelmed me with a speechless melancholy, which gradually began to prey on my vitals. She perceived it, and caught the contagion. The Baron, too, was grieved at my alarming situation. The Count asked me, with tender sympathy, what ailed me? But what could I reply? He imagined that I was happy.

We met one evening in the garden, equally immersed in that gloomy melancholy. I had been in a violent agony of mind all the day long, and almost distracted. Being impatient to get rid of that desponding mood, I took up my gun, and went into the park, where I wandered about till evening was already far advanced. No one knew where I was; and when I was returning to the castle, I met some servants, who had been sent in search of me. Having sent them back, I climbed over the wall of the park, to come
to

to the castle by a shorter way, and, to confess the truth, to meet Adelheid, who generally took a walk at that time.

I really met her, after a short ramble through the garden, absorbed in profound reverie, and walking with trembling steps. She did not observe me, although I was only a few paces distant from her, being occupied with a rose, which she alternately took from her bosom and replaced again. She was pale and dejected, carrying my cane in her hand, upon which she reclined, and frequently fixed her looks. I saw her start several times, looking around with a ghastly aspect, and moving her hand as if speaking with some person. At length she saw me standing close by her side, began to stagger, and I had scarcely time enough to receive her in my arms.

"Good God! Marquis, where have you been?" she said, collecting herself immediately; but that very moment a new misfortune happened. My gun being suspended round my shoulder by a strap, I pushed it back to be better able to sup-

port Adelheid; but it was unhappily cocked; the trigger came against the branch of a small tree, the fusil went off, and the ball wounded one of my fingers. It bled copiously; and my hand being lifted up, the blood streamed into the face and on the bosom of the Baronefs.

This accident restored her entirely to the full use of her senses, instead of depriving her of it. "Eternal God! what have you done?" she exclaimed, terrified, and instantly pulled me towards an adjacent arbour, to examine my wound, poured the contents of her smelling bottle upon her handkerchief, and tied it carefully up. Having dressed my wound with anxious alacrity, she asked me tenderly, "Do you suffer great pains, dear Marquis?" "Very little on my hand," I replied. "Good God! are you wounded in another place besides?" "Alas! here, here I have violent pains!" pointing at my heart. "What pains you there? Will you not tell it your sister?" she resumed, taking hold of my hand. "Dearest Adelheid, how
can

can I deserve that angelic goodness, how can I make amends for your uncommon tendernefs?" "Is this all that pains you? Have you not deserved my love long since? The best amends you can make for my tendernefs is to return my love."

"O, then, I have deserved it, and made ample amends; and you, Adelheid, are in *my* debt. After this poor heart of mine has wasted almost all its vital powers in a nameless grief, you ask why it bleeds? Oh! it is dreadful to love without hope; and a *tranquil* return of a *violent* passion is more galling to a spoiled, insatiable heart, than the most rancorous hatred."

A torrent of tears gushed from her eyes, and she began, after a short pause, "You are very unhappy, Carlos, if my tendernefs does not suffice you. I have frequently asked myself, in the hours of silent melancholy, whether I am capable of a more ardent love than that which my heart feels for you? I do not think I am. Tell me, dear Carlos, what do you desire me to do?"

"What I desire? Can words describe

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that?

that? I wish that Adelheid would live only for her Carlos, who knows no other happiness but that of thinking of his sweet sister, and would shed his last drop of blood to purchase her felicity."

"Is that all my Carlos wishes? Is not your image the sweetest and the only object of my dreams and of my happiest hours? Does not every blessing of my life depend upon your affection? Does not my heart beat stronger, and my countenance assume a deeper hue, when I see you? Does not your image follow me every where like my shadow? Are you not the only object of my pride, and the sole arbiter of my happiness? Shall I quit, for your sake, father, family, and friends; or live with you in a dreary solitude upon roots? Speak only, Carlos, and your Adelheid will cheerfully obey. The world, nay eternity itself, would be a lonely desert to me without you!"

"Then you consent to become my wife; my faithful, ever adored wife?"

"Wife,

“Wife, or sister. Is there any difference? Or do you think I have a stronger claim to your love as wife? Here is my hand; I will be any thing you wish me to be.”

On our return to the castle, we met the Baron, and the Count, who also had gone in quest of me, and with rapture embraced the recovered son and friend. I was happier than words can describe, but found it impossible to join in the lively sallies of their sportive humour. Adelheid was in the same predicament. The Baron perceived our mutual transport, and his cheerfulness encreased.

I went, on the subsequent morning, to the Baron, as soon as he got up, and discovered the whole to him. He conducted me silently to his daughter, who, as well as myself, encircled his knees, and, lifting us up with tears of affection in his eyes, said kindly, “God bless you, my children: you have prevented me.” S*****i almost was frantic with joy. Before a month elapsed Adelheid was my wife.

L 4

We

We resolved to spend the summer in the country, and to go to Paris the ensuing winter. We were unanimous in all our resolutions. The Count was looked upon as a member of our family, and had rendered himself as necessary to the Baron and Adelheid as he was to myself. How unspeakably charming was the summer to me! I never had enjoyed the fine season with so much hilarity and unclouded contentment. We became every day more susceptible of the blessings of a domesticated life; and our sociable happiness assumed a livelier complexion, and increased with every hour. I generally spent the morning in private with my wife; the dinner bell summoned us to more common pleasures. Every one of us regaled our sociable circle, after dinner, with the new ideas and observations he had gathered in the course of his activity in the house and abroad.

Adelheid was of a very serious character, and my joviality was gradually mellowed by her turn of thinking. She soon
desired

desired me to relate my history, and loved to hear me speak of Elmira. She was pleased with her melancholy disposition, and lamented her misfortunes; but conceived more predilection for the spirit of the confederation, in which they originated, than I wished: she found its principles good, and censured me now and then for having acted with too much impetuosity of passion. We discoursed on this subject every evening which found us alone. While she attempted to penetrate deeper into the character of the different circumstances, she did, indeed, not reconcile me to a society that had caused me so many sufferings, but, nevertheless, subdued my aversion from its principles.

The choice of our sociable pleasures depended on our humour and on circumstances. Adelheid hunted, fished, or walked, with us in the park. She sang uncommonly well, and played the pianoforte to perfection. I played the flute tolerably well: the Count was an adept on several instruments, and the old Baron

was

was delighted with our little concerts. Reading, and the mutual relation of our adventures, filled up the hours which were not dedicated to these and to more serious occupations. None of us had ever enjoyed so much unclouded happiness for so long a period, and none of our sociable circle had ever been so completely sensible of his felicity.

Thus autumn stole upon us unawares. We postponed our departure from time to time, till we could delay it no longer, if we wished to go to the capital. Having informed Count S***** of my marriage, he wrote almost every post day, urging me to come as soon as possible to Paris. We departed, at last; and at the latter end of November arrived at the capital. The political situation of France was, at that time, not yet arrived at that critical state, as to cause a great alteration in the sociable circles. I found my old friends again, united by the bonds of intimacy, and was welcomed with cordial joy. The Count appeared to be cheerful; and, although
not

not completely happy, yet satisfied with his Caroline.

It may be easily conceived what a noise the appearance of my wife made at Paris, where every new face charms and attracts the general notice of the fashionable circles. She easily found out the proper sociable tone which suited every circle to which she was introduced; became soon the favourite of all assemblies, and the idol of her acquaintances. She grew in a short time very intimate with Caroline, notwithstanding the disparity of their characters. The Baron was animated with new vigour, joined in all our diversions, and forgot the imbecillities of his advanced age. S*****i was his constant attendant and companion; and Don Bernhard was an agreeable addition to our domestic circle. We all were happy, or at least, appeared to be so, when a new accident seemed to be going to disturb our pleasure. Count S***** became, soon after our arrival at Paris, a riddle to myself and all his acquaintances. He grew sad, dissatisfied,

fatisfied, absent, and irascible. His whims were soon very troublesome to us, and he frequently treated his lady in a very harsh manner. I perceived that he preferred Adelheid's company to all other society; but without concluding therefrom upon the real cause of his extraordinary change, looked upon it as the effect of the similitude of their characters, and as an encouragement of his melancholy. I cemented, therefore, that friendship as much as possible, instead of throwing the least impediment into his way. Adelheid, confiding in me and my knowledge of the Count's character, made no difficulty to admit his visits without restraint, and to receive from him an attention which she considered as a matter of course in a friend of her husband. I do not know what particular information S*****i had received of the secret cause of his behaviour: in short, he, as well as Don Bernhard, grew every day colder to him, and jointly endeavoured to interrupt his intimacy with my wife, by throwing many little impediments into his way.

way. This served, however, only to add fuel to the flame: he intruded himself every where upon her; and at length provoked the voice of slander to such a degree, by the violence of his passion, that S*****i and Don Bernhard thought it their duty to inform me of it in plain terms. I did, indeed, ridicule them for their suspicion, but resolved to keep a watchful eye over him, and to take the first opportunity to speak to Adelheid about it.

This opportunity offered itself sooner than I imagined; for she came one evening, after my return from company, to my apartment, holding a paper in her hand, and shedding a torrent of tears.

“Dearest Adelheid!” I exclaimed, “what is the matter?” Having sent my valet away, she sat down by my side, and began, with a trembling voice, “Carlos, I cannot conceal the insult I have received any longer from you. It would be criminal in me to spare your friend on the present occasion. You certainly have observed how Count S***** has behaved to
me

me for some time. Read this note, which I have found this moment on my dressing table." She gave me the note and I read :

"Don't fear, beautiful Marchioness, that I shall betray the secret your eyes have confessed to me. Will you receive to-morrow night, at eight o'clock, beneath the large lime-tree, a vow which my looks have made to you some time since?—Lewis, Count of S*****."

It was the Count's hand writing; I could not be mistaken. My indignation was, at first, so vehement, that I flung it rather violently upon the table, and knocked a glass down. The servant, whom I had sent out of the room, returned, asking if I had rung for him? Having ordered him to retire, I embraced my wife, and promised to remove that little interruption of her tranquillity, without having recourse to violent measures. I only begged her not to change her deportment to the Count, and to leave every thing to me.

She

She seemed, indeed, to leave me with great tranquillity, but was actually far from being easy, and could not help informing her father of it. The Baron could conceal nothing from S*****i, and the latter communicated it to Don Bernhard. They all agreed that I ought to meet the Count in the room of my wife, and the latter promised to be present on that occasion.

I was of the same opinion, and resolved to adopt their advice. The Count was, during the day, rather easier than usual. I repaired to the great lime-tree before it had struck eight o'clock, and was astonished to find S***** already there. He read a paper, and kissed it repeatedly; but no sooner did he see me, than he exclaimed, with the greatest fury, "Hell and damnation! I am betrayed: but you, monster in human shape, shall not escape me a second time." With these words he rushed upon me sword in hand.

I was not unarmed, and defended myself against his furious attack; taking all possible care that he should not run against

the point of my sword. I exclaimed uninterruptedly, "For God's sake, Lewis, desist, and hearken to me!" But all my entreaties were fruitless. He uttered dreadful curses, foaming and grinding his teeth. I disarmed him, at length, and flung his sword into the adjacent thicket. He looked up to heaven, and ejaculated the most shocking execrations.

Loud cries behind me now attracted my attention. I looked round, and discerned Bernhard's red coat through the gloom of night. He was wrestling with a white figure, and on the point of sinking to the ground. Now he actually dropt down. I hastened, half frantic, to assist him: a dagger glittered over his head in one hand of his antagonist, while the other endeavoured to stop his mouth with a handkerchief. I pierced his opponent in the first violence of my passion, and in that moment perceived that he was *Amanuel*. Tearing the bandage from his head, I beheld *Alfonso*, my faithful servant, at my feet.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



